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THE NICETOWN CLUB FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, PHILADEPHIA, PA.

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In between Germantown and the heart of Philadelphia is a great manufacturing district euphoniously called Nicetown. Here are situated some of the huge industrial establishments, such as the Midvale Steel Works, the Sauquoit Silk Mills, the Link Belt Engineering Co., and many others which help to make the city famous as a manufacturing centre.

The streets of Nicetown are lined, for the most part, with rows of small two-story houses which press close upon the pavement. In prosperous times these make comfortable homes for working people, but in times of industrial depression two, three, and even four families are crowded into the tiny houses, and conditions become very bad. The children, ragged and dirty, fill the streets in the summer time and meet all the temptations that come from that evil playground. Saloons abound, of course, and on every hand are the small cigar stores and unwholesome loitering places. Near by are the great freight yards of the Philadelphia and Reading Rail Road, offering alluring opportunities for petty theft and dangerous excitement.

This is however by no means a slum region. The environment is not hopelessly bad. The boys and girls, mostly native born, are of such parentage as to give promise of becoming useful and successful citizens if they are but trained aright; whereas, on the other hand, if led astray or corrupted by any of the evil influences which surround them, they easily drop into the semi-criminal class and become all the more dangerous because of the natural ability with which they are endowed.

In this district there is no Young Men's Christian Association. The few churches were doing very little to reach the boys and girls.

Passing frequently through this region in the trolley cars, and seeing the streets swarming with children, it seemed to the minister of the Germantown Unitarian Church and some of his congregation that this was precisely the place in which to try to apply some of the ideals of their religion. Here certainly was an opportunity to express the principle of brotherhood. Accordingly a little two-story house was rented on one of the narrow streets. After being thoroughly cleaned—which cleaning itself was a revelation to the neighbours—it was fitted up in a simple way as an educational club-house. The cellar was turned into a carpenter's shop. Half a dozen small individual benches were secured, together with the necessary tools, and a number of scroll saws were added, which opened out a new field of activity for the boys.

Upstairs, the small kitchen was used for the girls' cooking class; the dining room was used for sewing or for games when the boys had it. The parlour was the assembly room and game room. On the second story, one room was fitted up as a tiny gymnasium and the other became the library. For the little children a Kindergarten was established, which, under the care of a trained teacher, was open every morning. For the older boys and

girls the club was open, at first, four evenings a week. There were special paid instructors in carpentering, scroll sawing, gymnastics, and brass hammering for the boys; in cooking, sewing, and gymnastics for the girls. The reading and game rooms were in charge of volunteer helpers, and opportunities of service were offered to all those who cared to take part in the work.

At first we were treated somewhat as invaders. Little by little, however, the friendship of the community was won, and the boys and girls began to crowd the small building. Friendly visiting among the families in the neighbourhood was begun, and in many cases of sickness and death such help was given as was possible. In one or two instances of desertion and habitual drunkenness steps were taken which made a new life possible for the family. The kindergarten children were likewise followed into their homes, and parents as well as children felt the influence of a new ideal.

After one year the small house on Cayuga Street proved utterly inadequate for the work. The club was then moved into a much larger three-story house near by. An English woman and her son, who ever since have been of great help in the work of the club, were engaged as resident caretakers. The third story of the building was given over to them. At this time also a director was engaged to take charge of the details of the management of the club. More classes were added and the work grew in various ways. A banjo and guitar club was formed, and it was remarkable to see what interest and ability the boys showed in this, for them, new field of music.

A series of illustrated Sunday afternoon talks was given during the winter. Protestant and Catholic alike listened without any thought as to the denomination of the minister, whom they knew simply as a friend and as president of the club.

During the third winter a significant step was taken. A committee was formed among the older boys, which was made responsible for discipline and many details of club management. These boys were known as committeemen and wore badges. One of them was made assistant in the savings bank, another became assistant in the gymnasium, others were appointed as helpers in the different rooms and classes. Of course the president and the director were members of the committee and attended the meetings and heard the reports, but the boys were made to feel that they were responsible for the order, development, and general success of the club. It is needless to say that their interest and zeal increased as they rose to meet this responsibility.

By the middle of the fourth year the club was again so overcrowded as to make it impossible to carry on the work properly. It was obviously meeting a great need. The boys were taken off the streets and a new vent given for the gang spirit. Even the police declared that there was a marked change in the community.

Then it was that great good fortune came. The family of Mr. E. W. Clark, who had been one of the founders and the chief supporter of the Germantown Unitarian Church, and who had been of great financial assistance in starting the work in Nicetown, decided to erect a suitable club-house as a memorial to him. Accordingly, through the interest and generosity of the Sauquoit Silk Manufacturing Co., a splendid corner lot was purchased at a low figure right in the centre of the manufacturing district. Here the E. W. Clark Memorial was built, being completed in April, 1907. The building was designed by Messrs. Frank Miles Day & Brother, of Philadelphia, many of the details of the inner arrangement being suggested by Mr. Simpson, the director of the club. For its purpose it can hardly be surpassed. It is fully equipped in every way. The manual training class rooms are light and airy. There are six of these down stairs, cobbling, carving, and pyrography being added to the carpentering, scroll sawing, and metal work for the boys. There is a large gymnasium with shower baths and dressing rooms adjoining. On the main floor is the auditorium which seats over four hundred. The stage is equipped with electric lights in the most modern fashion. Entertainments for both boys and girls and their parents are given here every Saturday evening from the middle of October to May. The boys and girls each give two plays a year themselves, and the training for these has been of great benefit in many ways. On the main floor also is the office and the large special room for

senior boys. Upstairs are the library, the girls' and boys' committee rooms, the shuffle board and game room, a special meeting room, and the suite of rooms, including well fitted kitchen, for the resident director.

On entering the new club-house the work with the girls, which had lagged somewhat, was taken up afresh. The women of the Church Alliance made themselves in great measure responsible for it. Mrs. Blizard became the volunteer directress, and has the use of the entire building for the older girls every Monday evening. Mrs. Woodbridge assumed charge of the younger girls under fourteen, who meet every Wednesday afternoon. The classes in millinery, dressmaking, plain sewing, embroidery, quilt making, have become very popular. A good deal of material was given by people in the church, and from this many of the girls made their own spring hats last season. A girls' committee has been organised similar to that of the boys. They have fitted up their room very tastefully, and have their meetings and tea on Saturday afternoon, when one of the girls acts as hostess.

The work with the boys, as well as that with the girls, grew rapidly.

During the summer for four years now the boys have been taken for two weeks to a camp which the club has established on the bank of the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal. Here they have their canoes and boats, plenty of good food, and no end of sport. The summer camp is of great physical benefit to the boys, and strengthens their allegiance to the club. Base-ball nines have been organised, of course, and during the winter the club has a number of basket-ball teams.

As the club grew in size the expense of conducting the work grew too, the total cost for 1907–8 being about $4,000 (four thousand dollars). But the good results likewise have become more obvious and more widespread. The total enrolment for the first year (1907–8) after entering the new club-house was eight hundred and thirty. The average daily attendance of the boys one hundred and seventy. The average attendance of the girls, who had the club-house only Monday evenings and Wednesday afternoons, was one hundred and sixty. On Saturday evenings, when both boys and girls with their parents came to the entertainments, the average attendance was about four hundred.

Each member of the club had a ticket for which those under fourteen paid five cents a month, those between fourteen and sixteen ten cents, while the senior boys over sixteen, by their own vote, decided to pay twenty-five cents a month. In the classes, the members, for the most part, paid only a little over half the cost of the material they used. Every boy and girl had the benefit of the gymnasium under the instruction of a trained teacher. The director and his wife, who lived in the club-house, had general charge of the work. In addition to the director there are now sixteen paid teachers and helpers, and about thirty volunteer helpers. There is a board of seven managers which meets monthly and is responsible for the financing and general management of the work. The director reports to this body. In between the meetings the president takes such action as is necessary, and keeps in close touch with all the different activities of the club.

It would take long to tell of everything that is being done. New things are being developed all the time. For two years now the Society for Organising Charity in Philadelphia has had an office in the building, and the club has assisted its agent in dealing with the problem of poverty in the community. Mothers' meetings have been held at the club-house and the friendly visiting has been continued.

The net result of the work is a distinct improvement among the boys and girls of Nicetown. The lives of many have been greatly changed. New opportunities of life and work have been offered to many. New and better employment in several cases has been found for those who deserved it. Character has been developed in some instances in a surprising degree. Bad habits of speech and conduct have been overcome. Ability has been discovered which led some of the girls and boys into good trades with their ambition well aroused. When instruction in the regular branches of reading, writing, or arithmetic has been wanted it has been given, and the general desire for education has been increased. Talks are frequently given to the boys by business men, doctors, and others, which have resulted in obvious good. To some extent the entire com-

munity has felt the influence of the club. When the boys have been arrested or have got into trouble they have been visited and helped whenever possible. In some cases the president or director of the club has had to cause the arrest of a boy and then, in one or two instances, to become responsible for him as a probationer.

The work is, of course, wholly unsectarian. The Unitarian name does not appear in it at all. It is however known in the community that the support and the workers come for the most part from the Unitarian church, and the result has been that other churches and individuals have been drawn into a closer relationship with us because of this practical application of our religion. The church has also in an increasing degree gained the respect and friendship of people throughout the city of Philadelphia. But the chief benefit has come to those who have actually taken part in the work. It has opened out a new field of activity to every one joining the church. Men and women have become interested who formerly were quite indifferent. The church itself is much more alive because of this service which it has undertaken. Both minister and people have come more and more to realise its value and to rejoice in it.

THE SCHOOLS OF THE WALLOON COMMITTEE, AMSTERDAM [1]

ETIENNE GIRAN

Our Sunday schools are as yet very young to take their place in the copiously written records of the SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY. They are scarcely ten years old, and are therefore of an age better fitted to keep silence and listen than to instruct others. I own to experiencing some shyness in offering the faltering utterances of an institution still in its childhood for the pages of a Review in which so many authoritative testimonies have already appeared. But it is said that truth sometimes issues from the mouths of babes, and perhaps our efforts, our strivings after knowledge, our brief experiences, may not be uninteresting or unprofitable to some.

Our schools are a little peculiar in their character. To the difficulties which promoters of Sunday schools have to conquer are added, in our case, difficulties of a special kind. We are a French-speaking church in the midst of a Dutch-speaking people. The Walloon or Huguenot refugee element has long since been entirely absorbed in the Dutch, and numbers of children come to us knowing only a few words of French ; now, our task consists in preparing them to follow a course of religious instruction and public worship in French. In spite of the fact that the teaching of modern languages in the schools of the town is remarkably well organised, and that our free course in French very happily completes it, it is obvious that in our Sunday schools questions of a purely linguistic kind arise side by side with religious matters. We have been under the necessity also, from the beginning, of discarding the method generally followed in Holland and France : one common lesson given by the minister or superintendent before all the children, grouped round their respective teachers in one room, would have been useless.

We took one of the school-buildings of the town, and classified our scholars according to their knowledge of French. At the outset five sections (counting in all one hundred and ten children) were created : preparatory, infant, middle, upper, and French. Each section had its special room in our school-building, and was placed under the direction of an authorised teacher, capable of maintaining strict order in his class, and of intelligently adapting the general method. This was our period of tentative effort and of experiment : it lasted three years. We lacked books, nothing having been written for schools of such a special kind as ours, and we had to create everything. The French section alone was able to make use of the text-books used in the French schools of liberal religious tendencies. Our teachers set themselves bravely to accomplish the task, and after conferences at which the general trend and spirit of the teaching were discussed, they wrote some very simple lessons with which they could run over such and such a period of Biblical history. Each teacher, experimenting with the various methods, finally fixed upon that one which seemed to him the most suitable to the state of culture and intel-

[1] Translated by Arnold Broadbent.

ligence of the children intrusted to him.

In the preparatory and infant sections the teaching is given entirely in Dutch (half an hour for Bible exposition and half an hour for French). Large pictures reproducing Biblical scenes serve as the text for the lesson in French (Berlitz system) and for the religious teaching. But while, in the preparatory section, this latter is purely oral, in the infant section the scholars are made to copy out a resumé which the teacher writes, in very simple French, on the blackboard : in the following lesson they have to repeat this text by heart and to reply *viva voce* to a number of questions relating to the Dutch narration. In the middle section, the religious teaching is given in Dutch and the resumé of the lesson is translated into French ; the essential words of all the sentences are written on the blackboard and the scholars have to complete the text themselves at home. In the upper section the teaching is given in French, with explanations in Dutch ; in the French section it is exclusively in French, but in both sections the scholars have to write down in French at home the replies to questions dictated by the teacher. Some of their efforts are remarkable, but on the whole they are very satisfactory, and we have found that the scholar likes to have something to do at home.

At the present time I am endeavouring to write some lessons appropriate to the knowledge of our children for each section, but it is a long and difficult task. I have so far only succeeded in writing out three sets of notes on the Old Testament, but I require five, and as many for the New Testament. The teaching in our schools is therefore not yet quite harmonious ; it probably will not be for some years. The difficulties increase with the number of our scholars, of whom we had three hundred and eighty in July last. We have had to take another school-house, and we are on the eve of taking yet another, in a distant suburb. Our original sub-division still continues, but each section now includes several classes.

Frequent conferences, the agenda of which are decided upon in advance, and our common convictions, give to our teaching a certain unity. Essentially Biblical, it gives to the moral element a frankly preponderating place. From the dogmatic point of view, it is strictly on traditional lines in the infant section (as is most suitable for children of nine or ten years old), but it awakens at an early stage the critical spirit. We are not afraid of sowing progressively in the enquiring mind of the child the seeds of fertile heresies. In the French section the only accepted method is one of absolute freedom of interpretation. I have long felt assured that doubt wisely 'inoculated' into the souls of the young is a sovereign preventive against Atheism and Materialism.

Our school is held on Sunday mornings from half-past nine to half-past eleven ; we found that the parents, for various reasons, were very pleased to get their children out of the way at that hour, and preferred to have them at home in the afternoon. In order not to deprive our lady teachers of the worship which they are anxious to attend, their lesson only lasts until half-past ten ; at that hour in each school the classes undergo a fresh grouping and, under the direction of special masters, our children then set themselves to learn hymns appropriate to their age. Sunday school hymns being generally of doubtful melody and lamentable Christology, we have had to make a good many researches, modifying and creating where necessary ; our first selection of hymns will soon be ready. Our hymns are not exclusively religious ; we have action-songs and childish ditties for the little ones, choral tunes taken from the works of the great musical composers for the grown-ups, and marching songs and festival hymns for both ; sometimes in church, on great occasions, the better disciplined and more advanced groups from a musical point of view render appropriate chants. The numbered music (Paris and Chevet's system) gives surprising results.

We desired a strongly organised school which would be a school indeed as regards discipline, and a source of unnumbered joys as regards its recreations.

The teachers are required to correct the homework of their scholars, to question them regularly and to give them notes every Sunday. To this end we have published special note-books. Every quarter a general recapitulation takes place in all the classes, and the marks awarded for homework, lessons, good conduct, and the general revisal are communicated to the

parents. We have tried lantern lessons for the revisals and find that they give the best results, besides being extremely interesting to the children. We shall have nothing but revisals of this nature in two or three years, when the collection of lantern slides which we are trying to get together is more complete.

Each scholar has a little book which follows him through the whole course of his studies ; every three months, after the recapitulation, it has to be signed by his parents, who are thus made aware of the marks which he has obtained.

A very strict rule is enforced as regards punctuality, conduct in class, attention and work ; we ruthlessly exclude scholars who show no signs of goodwill. Our door-keepers see to the closing of the doors five minutes after the time of opening school ; we have by this means effectually got rid of the whims of our little late-comers. Our lady visitors do not let a single absence pass without finding out the reasons, and out of the three hundred and eighty children on our books we have only about a dozen absences on Sundays, and these are always genuine. Even on skating days this is still the case ! Our superintendents, responsible for their respective schools, present every year a circumstantial report to the Walloon Committee of the Liberal Evangelical movement. Inspectors, who are members of that Committee, regularly visit the classes.

Every year the generosity of friends allows us to get up a fine Christmas Party, at which, around the Christmas Tree, our children receive very beautiful prizes, according to their efforts and the results obtained. No sermon is given at our Christmas treat, only a very brief address and a prayer. Our scholars take part in little plays in French, dance simple measures, and sing stirring choruses. In summer a fête in the open air brings together anew the teachers and scholars ; trips by boat, with Punch and Judy shows and plenty of noise ; an outing to the seaside, with games, kites, and footballs. Our Sunday school is a school for amusement as well as instruction. The watch-word is ' Interest ' ; it is a march stolen on our gloomy dulness and our fogs if we can start merry laughter on the lips of the children and shed a little light into their hearts.

A NEW ORDER OF CHIVALRY

An Address to the London Guilds' Union

FRANK K. FREESTON

It seems to me that our chief need to-day is a new idea and order of Chivalry. We need a modern recovery, not of the olden institution and outward form, but of its inner devotion and its finer discipline.

The old Chivalry, admittedly, was warlike and military; the New Chivalry must be pacific and conciliatory. The one engaged men of arms; the other must enlist soldiers of Christ. But the same chivalrous spirit may animate both.

What is this chivalrous spirit, and why do we need it? Let me reply quite plainly, and hope to carry you with me.

There is more good will in the world to-day than in any previous period of history. There is more than enough of it, surely, to sweep most of our troubles and evils away: but it is only yet of half effect because it lacks comradeship, effort and object. It is too uncertain and indefinite in its attempted work: it goes its own way without much sense of common responsibility; it passes over from one thing to another as though nothing serious were the matter; it does not like to be ordered about, or trained to lay on itself the yoke of obedience and self-government. But it can be prompt and splendid occasionally, when summoned definitely to a difficult duty.

Is there then any possibility of turning the occasional into the everyday, the casual into the reliable, the well-meaning into the well done? Is there any idea or order, any working theory, which can fire the easy goodwill of to-day into more ardent responsibility, more definite duty, more sense of urgency, more gladness of unity, more comradeship, more zest and joy, and thus learn to train and employ the goodwill of to-day to a further and nobler efficiency?

Such an idea, such a working theory was Chivalry ; and such it again may be. Its distinctive merit and meaning were very plain. It set up aloft a very definite object and then demanded a no less definite obedience to it. This ideal had to be served by the will in strict obedience

to rule; there was nothing optional, nothing casual. Its first summons was to be a soldier of Christ and his Church; its second to engage and pledge one's powers in the service of those in distress; its third to discipline daily both soul and body in order to keep that service faithful and holy. And so the young knight had first to prove his worth before being permitted to take his knightly oath; then to make his solemn vow of consecration when his Christian armour was given to him at the age of twenty-one; then to guard his arms and grasp his sword-cross in the midnight church and watch for the angels of the Invisible Presence; and thence at last to be ready always with high courage, for daring enterprise, hardest difficulties or humblest deeds, to defend rights and redress wrongs, to practise pure honour and to treat with gentlest respect women and the weak. Can you wonder that such an institution proved a grand discipline for its time? And it did great deeds, inspired great crusades, made and held its place as a power of goodness fighting the powers of darkness. It was Chivalry that redeemed Feudalism from utter social oppression and so led in time to a more human civilisation. 'The best school of moral discipline,' says one historian, 'which the Middle Ages afforded was the institution of chivalry.' For over four centuries it floated its high ideal before a world of struggle and trouble as an inspiration of duty, an enthusiasm of humanity, upholding laws and manners and morals in a lawless, mannerless age, exercising throughout Europe an influence for good and right which for ever redounds to its credit. Then it began to degenerate to the great regret of those who believed in it.

There is a little old book in the British Museum Library, entitled *The Book of the Ordre of Chyvalrye*. It was translated, edited and printed by Caxton, probably in Westminster Abbey, in the year 1483. Although so rare and ancient, its ink is still black and its type distinct. The knights of England are rebuked for allowing the chivalrous code to fall into 'shameful desuetude.' Caxton's motive in giving this book to the world was to bring back true Christian Knighthood. But it fell away into further degeneracy and then into final decay.

But I think with Caxton that we need it back again. Not the outer institution, not the later imitation, not the military form, *but the consecration, the devotion, the discipline, the organisation, the common ideal and aim and plan* all applied and modified to the need of our modern time and condition. The knights are dust and their good swords rust, but their temper and their character must be kept bright and keen for ever. Still do we require in our moral and social warfare the crusader, and the templar, the knightly honour and the chivalrous idea, all bent upon the holy work, the peaceful conflict, of bringing good out of evil, and, out of darkness, light. Only think of all the alertness, industry, skill and money lavished in willing manner upon the art of war. Think of the millions of trained, drilled, disciplined men who are fed and paid by European labour to repel a remotely possible danger; think how many a new and costly invention is immediately regarded and seized upon as a most valuable death dealing machine! Then think again what might happen if the same alertness, industry, skill, money, men, training, invention and discipline could be devoted to life-saving and life-mending, to attacking the actual foes of society and repelling the real dangers of to-day.

What then can we learn from Chivalry? Surely, to take the Chivalry ideal of personal honour and social welfare, to take the military ideal of training and discipline, to take the physical ideal of obedient exercise and drill, and then turn them on at full steam into the binding and welding of ourselves together for a definite pacific warfare, into the upraising and reforming of human condition and character.

It is to this idea that I look with hope for the future: it is the ideal and the order for to-morrow: nay, it is even to-day beginning faintly to find the better way. Recall these footnote words from Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*. 'I wish there were a true order of Chivalry instituted for our English youth of certain ranks, in which both boy and girl should receive, at a given age, their knighthood and ladyhood by true title; attainable only by certain probation and trial both of character and accomplishment. . . Such an institution would be entirely, and with all noble

results, possible in a nation which loved honour.'

The Boy Scout movement has taken to heart the idea and the need of knighthood. Its instructors are enjoined to revive in boyhood some of the rules of the knight of old, and to teach the knight's code under the threefold head of chivalry to others, discipline of self, self-improvement. This in itself is good and right; but it is unfortunate that there is mixed up with it the military tone and spirit. St. George is to be honoured with flower and flag, and thereby held up as 'the patron saint of cavalry and scouts all over Europe.' The scout is told to be prepared to fight, to learn to shoot, to join the army class, to play war games, to charge home with confidence when the moment arrives, and the ideal scouts set up for praise are the Mafeking Cadets from whom the movement takes its rise. He is taken abroad to military manœuvres and paraded at home in Lord Mayor's shows. Oh, the pity of it! Can we not help to keep back this insidious war spirit which may seriously thwart and blot this otherwise fine movement? If its object, as alleged, is a training for peace, we must watch and expose these military proclivities.

For this reason, I hold, the Boy's Own Brigade is a safer, wiser project for putting chivalry into effect. With a minimum of uniform, and no playing at sham fighting, all the emphasis is thrown upon life strengthening and life saving, ambulance instruction, gymnastic and swimming competition, peace drilling and marching, open air camping and nature observation, *all in the name of religion, in connection with Sunday schools and with regular church services.* As a chaplain of this new but increasing organisation, I earnestly hope for the time when every school and mission will be helped by its minister and congregation to train and spread a real chivalrous knighthood through its Boy's Own Brigade.

But I regard The Guild chiefly and finally as our new Order of Chivalry, and an Order to which the Boys' Brigade should naturally lead. It holds its motto banner aloft 'For God and the Good Life.' It has its consecration vow of service, its admission into definite membership, its bond of comradeship, its capacity for friendship, its rules to be followed, and its orders to be obeyed. It has its knighthood and ladyhood therefore, its high code of honour, its ideals of loyalty to the Order, courtesy to women and children, practical pity for the weak and infirm, social service, religious duties, Christian graces. What more does it lack than this, that by greater discipline of our wills, higher allegiance to our vows, and deeper devotion to our ideals, we may bring back the old spirit of chivalry into our Guilds and Guild idea, into our campaign and order, into our peaceful warfare for true personal and social welfare. Perhaps the simple matter of a small outward badge to wear would prove a helpful reminder that we are pledged to this New Chivalry Order.

The summons sounds clear to each single member. Be a Crusader, a Christian Soldier; wear the Christian armour, raise the Christian banner, march in close order to the war with not less but more ardour than if you were called to kill life instead of save it. Look for inspiration and courage to the glowing pictures which painters and poets have created for your service—Spenser's Red Cross Knight, Malory's King Arthur, Wordsworth's Happy Warrior, Tennyson's Sir Percival, Watts' Sir Galahad. There have been many Sir Galahads of the slums since Arnold and Mary Toynbee, Alfred Milner and Lewis Nettleship, met Canon and Mrs. Barnett to found the first University Settlement which led ultimately to that home of Chivalry, the Toynbee Hall of to-day. The age of Chivalry is passed, we say; but Charles Kingsley made reply: 'The age of Chivalry is never past so long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth, and a man or woman left to say "I will redress that wrong or spend my life in the attempt."' The age of Chivalry is never past so long as men have faith enough in God to say 'God will help me to redress that wrong, or, if not me, surely he will help those that come after me.' May God help us to make our Guilds real leagues and bands of Chivalry.

There can only be one permanent revolution—a moral one; the regeneration of the inner man. How is this revolution to take place? Nobody knows how it will take place in humanity, but every man feels it clearly in himself. And yet in our world everybody thinks of changing humanity, and nobody thinks of changing himself. —*Tolstoy.*

DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING

HERBERT McLACHLAN, M.A., B.D.

The attempt to set before teachers some of the difficulties attendant upon teaching in our Sunday schools is not meant to discourage any who are drawn by nature or by the solicitations of friends, to undertake the religious training of the young. For these truly, but not less for those already engaged in active work, it may be well to understand the conditions that hinder effective teaching, for even if these cannot be wholly removed—an ideal perhaps as vainly, as it is greatly to be desired—at least it is possible they may, in some measure, be overcome. It is sometimes urged that our difficulties are largely of our own making. I am inclined to agree. And the teacher who does not see any difficulties in his way often constitutes in himself a serious stumbling block to progress. For if he be perfect of his kind, he is not sufficiently in sympathy with his weaker brethren, whereas, should he be, as is not uncommonly the case, blissfully ignorant of deficiencies in manner or method so manifest to his colleagues, he puts himself almost outside the pale of salvation, and induces in others a woeful belief in the utter depravity of human nature.

Roughly speaking, we discover two classes of teachers in our midst. There are those who find the work arduous and burdensome, to whom it is a duty but never a delight, and whose self-sacrifice is as praiseworthy as it is void of result. Then there are those who do not consider teaching to be labour at all, but rather a convenient name covering a Sabbath season gaily given up to cheery conversation, or spent in retailing, from a never-ending store, valuable personal experiences. I need hardly say that my classification does not profess to be exhaustive. I am a teacher myself—and there are others. But my point is this—both these types of teachers, which do not represent imaginary denizens of some distant land, but are familiar, sometimes painfully familiar, to many of us—both these types without the slightest intention so to do give rise to difficulties in our schools.

The serious and strenuous, but uninteresting and uninterested, teacher, will naturally pin his faith to some ponderous text-book. (Observe, I use the masculine pronoun throughout in the generic sense.) He will read carefully and consistently, after preparation of a kind, the pages he peruses, and by dint of much perseverance may transfer the text, more or less, to the minds of his hearers. But of the subject of their studies, his scholars are entirely innocent. Woe to this class if its members enter for an examination, and the examiners dare to do their duty. I remember a youth who repeatedly failed to satisfy the requirements of a University matriculation examination in history, although he spent hours in learning by heart pages of Green's Shorter History, and could recite some of them with a great gusto. Professor James gives an admirable illustration of how children should not be taught. 'A friend of mine,' he writes, 'visiting a school, was asked to examine a young class in geography. Glancing at the book she said, "Supposing you should dig a hole in the ground, hundreds of feet deep, how would you find it at the bottom—warmer or colder than at the top?" None of the class replying, the teacher said, "I'm sure they know, but I think you don't ask the question quite rightly. Let me try." So taking the book, she asked: "In what condition is the interior of the globe?" and received the immediate answer from half the class at once, "The interior of the globe is in a condition of igneous fusion."' Such scholars obviously knew their class-book, but not the subject it was intended to serve. The topic, whatever it be that is taught, should grow before the minds of the children by means of apt and felicitous illustration. The language of the book may be given to the class, but it must be explained, and commented upon, and questions put to the scholars in language that is your own. It is thus that the lesson gains in charm and power from the influence of personality. Not only teachers, but even learned lecturers may lack this gift of elucidation. I recall one who after stating a more or less difficult proposition invariably tries to explain it by a process of inversion. As though he should say 'In the science of Arithmetic, three added to one make four. Now I will say a word or two about that. When

we come to add, we shall find that one plus three is nothing more or less than four.' Such a method of explanation had its humourous aspect, and had only really one defect—namely, that it never explained anything. Nevertheless, facility in illustration is itself sometimes a precarious advantage, for words used may have one meaning to the teacher and quite another to the scholar. One teacher was trying to explain to a little girl what was meant by the passive voice. 'Suppose,' he said, 'that you kill me: you, who do the killing are in the active voice, and I, who am killed, am in the passive voice.' 'But how can you speak if you are killed,' said the child. 'Oh, well, you may suppose that I am not quite dead.' The next day the child was asked, in class, to explain the passive voice, and said 'It's the kind of voice you speak with when you're not quite dead.' The scholar under the care of the patient plodding teacher with his book, will never fall into this pit: but with a distressing air of utter weariness, he listens eagerly for the bell which hails the dismissal of school. Our difficulty is that upon their emergence from the tender mercies of the toilsome exponent of the printed page, our scholars have acquired a distaste of knowledge, which is not easy to overcome. A book has acquired a meaning for them, like the sight of the medicine bottle, and consequently provokes a feeling of repulsion.

Further, the general discipline of the school is not improved by the conduct of the scholars under the supervision of this teacher. Either they slumber peacefully during some portion of the lesson, or they display considerable ingenuity in amusing themselves throughout a tedious time—something, of course, depending upon the age of the scholars and the vigilance of the teacher. But teacher No. 2, who waves aside all text-books, as not meant for him, and is ready, with a light heart, to teach any class at a moment's notice, is not less a weariness to the flesh. True, he may amuse his class, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not, but he seldom instructs: and when his scholars pass out of his care, they carry with them the conviction that Sunday school teaching has nothing in common with that of the day school. In the Sunday school, they may talk almost as much as their teacher, there is no rote or system there, and no book or subject upon which they need concentrate attention. The teacher is ready to answer questions about anything, for he knows almost everything, and they may wander at will from 'Where did the Bible come from?' to 'Why do the Australians play cricket so well?'

If we must confess that one teacher hides his personality under a book, with equal truth we must add that the other gives it too much play. If he is a Socialist, a Vegetarian, an Abstainer, or a member of the No Hat Brigade, (and he may quite properly be one or all of these) he will speak without ceasing of the influence of environment, the dangers of eating beef, the suicides due to drinking beer, or the baldness provoked by wearing headgear. I do not wish to discuss the urgent importance of these matters, I would merely mildly suggest that they are not of paramount or exclusive importance to our scholars. Obviously, the teacher I have now in mind, does not believe in any examination scheme. Why should he—he never went in for them himself! Perhaps, we may add, it was fortunate that he did not. He has no faith in carrying forward any scheme of instruction from week to week. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Now teaching which aims only at the present, may be far from tedious, but it is none the less pernicious, for it is disjunctive, and purposeless—in a word 'scrappy.' But our teacher believes strongly in experience—especially his own. Now I have not a word to say against experience. We are certainly not born with it, sometimes we do acquire it, but, for the most part, it is thrust upon us. I have not much myself, but I do believe in it. Is it possible for any of us to do otherwise? But we need to check our experience, which may have been limited or unfortunate, by the experience of others, by careful reading, and strenuous thinking. No man should be a law unto himself. 'A man who thinks himself to be anything, apart from his fellows,' said Hamilton Thom, 'is like a stone that has dropped out of a building.' May we not add that in our Sunday schools he is a weighty obstruction in our way. We cannot remove him, and resignation is the last thing that would suggest itself to him. Meanwhile, here he is athwart

our path, giving our scholars the impression that it is possible to teach, without ever attempting to learn. Doubtless our friend is cheerfully optimistic, and feels that he has the truth in regard to most things on earth or in heaven. But surely a teachable temper is the necessary prelude to the acquisition of truth. People who boast of their privilege to judge for themselves on subjects, of which they do not possess the means of judging wisely, are not wont to discover new truth, for eagerness to acquire truth involves eagerness to avail oneself of every help that offers.

Passing for a moment from the teacher difficulty, let us consider briefly the Bible question, with which we, as Unitarians, are specially concerned. The Bible is not with us the sole or ultimate authority in religion as the revealed word of God. If it were it would take its place, naturally and inevitably, in our schools as the one instrument of all teaching. Because it is not so, there is some danger of our undervaluing the Bible as a marvellous vehicle of noble ideas, and as a text-book unrivalled of ethics and religion. I am tempted to emphasise this point, for I was trained in a Unitarian Sunday school, and lived to regret it. I mean this, my college course was made much more difficult for me by the fact that I did not possess that acquaintance with the text which men who had been Wesleyans and Churchmen enjoyed. But that is not all my case. I suppose the majority of our teachers and scholars, for very good reasons I doubt not, are not looking to the ministry as a profession. But you and I are equally liable to be drawn into a discussion of Scripture with those who regard it otherwise than we do. Candidly, I fear for the average Unitarian boy, trained in our schools, who thus enters into debate with an orthodox friend. Not long ago I heard from the Unitarian Van the statement that we Unitarians use generally in our schools the Revised Version of the Bible in preference to the Authorised, as giving more nearly the original text of the oldest MSS. I agreed with the latter half of this statement, but found myself wondering whether the first half was not rather a pious hope than a statement of fact. I remembered also that at the two schools with which I am connected I found that there were no copies of the Revised Version when I desired to make use of it—a want, I am bound to add, speedily supplied. Our difficulty, as teachers, with the Bible is not that we Unitarians have no good text-books on the Bible: I need only remind you that the minister of the City Temple referred an inquirer to the Unitarian Association at Essex Hall for rational and reverent text-books on the Bible. No; our difficulty is this—that lacking the conviction that the Bible is the veritable word of God, we are compelled to treat it as a product of human thought, and exercise our own reason upon it, which for the most part of us means that we *must* have recourse to these helps; and it is our reluctance to recognise this fact that leads to difficulties in our Biblical instruction. Let there be in every school a small Teachers' Reference Library, and if possible a Teachers' Preparation Class, then the charm and beauty of the Book of books may once more assert itself over our minds, and this defect in our teaching be repaired. As things are, I venture to say that it is possible for a lad to pass through some of our schools and retain all the crude doctrines and ideas about God planted in his mind by careless parents or orthodox playfellows, so complete is the neglect in some quarters of Biblical or doctrinal instruction. An incident which came under my own observation illustrates this. A lad of twelve or thirteen years of age followed a gentleman who was inspecting, one Sunday morning, the heating apparatus of the school. 'It is warm here,' said the boy. 'Yes,' replied the gentleman. 'Still,' continued the boy, 'it's not so warm here as it is in Mr. Satan's home.' Here was the doctrine of Hell Fire lingering in that boy's mind, and only chastened in its expression by what he regarded as politeness due to the gentleman addressed. Yet he had attended a Unitarian school since he was quite a child.

This leads me to consider a further difficulty involved in our teaching. The atmosphere outside our schools is redolent of orthodox dogmas. If our children come from Unitarian homes, the parents may do much to help the teachers to withstand the influence of this miasma of orthodoxy; but frequently Unitarian parents, either from what they conceive to be love of liberty, or more often from sheer neglect,

never refer to religion in their intercourse with their offspring if they can possibly avoid it. Strangely enough, I have even met Unitarian parents who deliberately impressed the doctrine of Hell Fire upon their children for the purposes of discipline. And, of course, many of our scholars are drawn from homes where parents are of no definite religious persuasion at all. Can we wonder that our teachers, fighting almost single-handed the baneful and powerful influences at work in the opposite direction, sometimes fail to banish from the minds and hearts of their children the horrible doctrines that beset them before and behind ?

We need not stay to consider the pernicious effect of the dogmatic instruction in the day schools attended by many of our scholars. Happily, however, it is becoming more and more possible for parents to have their children taught in an undogmatic atmosphere, not only in elementary schools but also in public schools like Willaston and Universities like Leeds and Manchester.

There is another aspect of this difficulty created by the conflict between the school and the outside world. It not infrequently happens that the home influence is opposed to that of the school. In arithmetic 2 x 2 make 4, in the kitchen of the cottage and in the class-room of the Council school. But, alas, the names God and Christ, treated with such reverence by the teachers, are commonly only heard in the homes when they are taken in vain by the parents. More than once I have heard children who could only lisp the words, giving expression to blasphemous oaths. Against all impurity of language, which is often nothing more than use and wont, we must make a firm stand, not only implicitly but also of set purpose.

So far we have considered difficulties due to the mental twists of teachers and opposing influences bearing upon scholars. It is time to take a wider survey of difficulties arising from the general conditions under which we work. Our teachers are all volunteers ; they may serve one year or seven ; they may desert the ranks whenever they will, and none shall say them nay. Only conviction or a love of service or both can hold them to their posts. But this argues not for a greater tenderness in our treatment of teachers, but a greater severity exercised by teachers towards themselves. When our teachers realise that they belong to a great commonwealth, in which their duties and discipline are self-imposed, there should be more critical self-examination and a more conscientious discharge of obligations. Let a teacher idealise as much as he likes the realities of his task—it may help him to realise more nearly his ideal. Whatever he does, he must loyally support ' the powers that be ' in their demand for discipline. We have no rod, and we would not use it if we had, but our superintendent has only one voice. The teacher who does not assist in keeping order puts a difficulty in the way of another teacher doing so. Then, punctuality should be the first law of every school code. The teacher who comes habitually late to school—and there are such—has much to answer for. Example is stronger than precept. Even when scholars are not tempted to improve upon their teacher, they are none the less a source of anxiety to the responsible heads of the school. As for the absentee teacher : like the poor, he is always with us—a perplexing problem in all our councils. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. The more he is away, the more relish he has for it, until at last his rare visits to the school are usually to no purpose. True, a substitute is sometimes forthcoming, but the hardened absentee has passed the stage when he felt it incumbent upon himself to provide a substitute. And even the substitute is sometimes a difficulty. A clergyman of the Established Church relates how the teaching in his school was carried on in classes separated from each other by a curtain. The class next to his was being taught by a substitute. His own work was, however, greatly hindered by the sounds of various animals—cats, dogs, sheep, and the like—proceeding from the other side of the curtain. After his patience was exhausted, he dashed aside the dividing material, seized the principal offender, and hauled him over the seats into his own class. Order was almost instantly restored. But, presently a small boy in the next class timidly drew aside the curtain and said, ' Please, sir, you've got our teacher.' It was the substitute. Surely a teacher who for any reason absents himself from school, should not only pro-

vide a substitute, but should provide one who can teach. I am willing to allow that many of our schools seem designed to serve any purpose better than that of teaching, but we increase the disadvantages under which we labour by needlessly multiplying our classes—on the principle, perhaps, of the more the merrier. The result is that some five or six scholars engage the attention of a teacher here; whilst there, well within earshot, another small group is being taught by a second teacher. I do not wonder that the wits of the children sometimes go wool gathering under such conditions. I am sure mine would if I were a scholar in some of our schools. Larger classes, fewer teachers, and as far as may be class-room accommodation, are what we should aim at. There is no virtue in mere numbers, whether of classes or teachers.

Another point is this. The relations between scholars and teachers in our schools have been greatly affected by the spread of popular education. Reading recently an article on Education in Sunday schools, written over half a century ago, I was forcibly impressed by the changes that have taken place within that time. Then in this country more than seven hundred and fifty thousand children had no other opportunity of education save that afforded by the Sunday school. Commonly eighty per cent. of the children who attended could not read. The annual report of the Sunday School Society for the year under observation asserts 'There is no such thing as a natural taste for reading.' To-day, our children often read —nay, devour—literature of one kind or another. A flood of trashy stories, of novelettes, and of rubbishy weeklies, makes its way into the homes of the people. As teachers, we have to stem the force of this torrent, and turn the reading habits of our children in other directions. Pray let us not in our zeal abandon or rob of its place of honour our special course of study in the endeavour to enlist attention. The reverend gentleman to whom I have previously made allusion, tells of a dear lady, who would not hurt a fly, that schooled herself to read to her boys in class tales of gore and hairbreadth escapes by land and sea, with the object of gaining a hearing for the Biblical lesson which followed. Needless to say, such heroic efforts on her part completely failed. The boys listened with breathless interest to the bloodthirsty executions of the pirate, or the diabolic cunning of the detective, but had no ear for the benedictions upon the peacemaker, the meek and the merciful. Their imaginations had been fired and their sympathies roused, and the period of Biblical study found them revolving, I imagine, the possibilities of one day proving their prowess in the Wild West. Imagination must be controlled, desires must be chastened, and passions held in check. Curiosity need not be damped down, but rather stimulated, for thus will the powers of thought be cultivated. Our aim is not so much to impress our own mind upon the child, as to quicken and strengthen the mind of the child. Only so can children acquire the capacity to assimilate knowledge. As Professor Welton observes, 'A teacher can no more perform for his pupils the functions of mental assimilation than those of physical digestion. He can, by much insistence, cause certain labels of information to adhere for a time—though, alas, they sometimes get woefully displaced and confused—but this no more feeds, trains, or develops the mind than covering the body with adhesive postage stamps would nourish or exercise it.'

Above all, Christianity must be something not merely talked about, but actually practised in our schools. Teachers who are jealous of each other, quick to resent fancied slights, eager to assert personal rights, must not be surprised if teaching is found difficult and arduous. Children are quick to perceive the hostility between profession and practice.

Another and chief difficulty in our teaching is that secular interests are suffered to determine the relations of teachers one to another. It should not require setting forth in conference that differences of opinion with reference to the affairs of the social union, sewing circle, or cricket club should not interfere with fraternal co-operation in the teaching of the young. We want a larger and more generous spirit in our schools, more of Christian love and charity. An agnostic, whom I met whilst engaged in Van Mission work, put this question to me, 'Are the members of your school and church living the Christ life?' It was a tribute to the power of Christ, and an application of his test: 'By their

fruits shall ye know them.' What we want on every side is a perfect understanding that our Sunday schools exist primarily for the cultivation of character, and the training of children in the ways and words of Christ. This work may be furthered, in some directions, by provision of the means of recreation and amusement. But, woe to our schools if what should be subordinate becomes of paramount importance. Once self-glorification and pleasure hunting are the chief aims of our teachers, then strife, envy, and all uncharitableness will eat their way like a canker into our schools, and an institution which appears outwardly righteous unto men inwardly is full of hypocrisy and iniquity. We shall have to make sacrifices, never of principles, but often of opinion, if we desire to lead children to rejoice in the light of Christian love. Not only intelligibility but spirituality is requisite in a teacher. As a modern writer says, speaking of the teaching of history in day schools, 'Methods are after all but the dry bones of teaching. There are very many in the open valley; and lo, they are very dry.' He only who has a genuine interest in the story of the past, sympathy with the painful efforts and the slow achievements of men, and not less with their failures and their ignorance, can make the dry bones live. While he who regards the characters of his pupils as of more value than their attainments, who is quick to see, in the little world of school, the same elements of good and evil, the same forces of ambition and humility, of honour and cowardice, of truth and falsehood, the zeal for duty and the great refusal, the self-seeking and self-sacrifice, that have shaped the history of nations, will find in his lessons moments of opportunity which it will be the highest of all duties to turn to good account.'

In all your teaching never forget that interest, like yawning, is infectious. How often have we at one time or another stayed to look over a bridge at some passing boat or bird, and been surprised and gratified to see how many people wished to share our interest and satisfy their curiosity. So, in class, let your scholars see your interest in the subject; and if you have studied your boy as well as your book, you will impart to him some measure of your own love of learning.

Would you teach after the manner of the Master? Then get wisdom: the wisdom that is from above which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance and without hypocrisy. And with all your getting, get understanding, understanding of the natures of your children, of your tasks as teachers, and of the vital truths of religion. The great Teacher knew the waywardness of children —he had watched them at play in the market-place, but he knew also their winsomeness, and revered their simplicity and trustfulness. The problem of class management can only be solved by the application of the Christian Rule of Three—Faith, Hope, and Love, and the greatest of these is Love.

Finally, the great danger of Sunday schools is, as Dr. Channing observed, 'That they will fall into a course of mechanical teaching, that they will give religion as a lifeless tradition, and not as a quickening reality. What,' he asks, 'is the misery of the multitudes in Christian countries? Not that they disbelieve Christianity; not that they hold great errors; but that truth lies dead within them. They use the most sacred words without meaning. They hear of spiritual realities, awful enough to raise the dead, with utter unconcern; and one reason of this insensibility is that teaching in early life was so mechanical, that religion was lodged in the memory and the unthinking belief, whilst the reason was not awakened, nor the conscience nor the heart moved.'

What is our primary object as teachers? Surely to prepare those in our schools in order that they may hereafter loyally discharge their duties as men and women, duties in relation to each other as members of society, duties in relation to themselves as children of God, 'Heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ'; in a word, to enshrine in the hearts of our scholars the spirit of Jesus Christ. How can this be done? To no small extent by all those who exert an influence over them, and particularly the teachers, breathing themselves a spirit of good-will, of pure and spiritual benevolence, being peaceful amid disturbance, gentle under provocation, having learned to bear and forbear. Difficulties will doubtless remain, but we need never despair. For, 'Where there is

really the inner faith in some deep-seated conviction'—to quote Dr. Martineau—'the outward obstructions of the lot spontaneously yield to it; and scarcely is there any mountain of difficulty that may not, by this power, be hurled into the sea.'

'SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD'

Her epitaph has never been engraved. A laudatory inscription on a tomb is not in keeping with that gentle, modest soul. Her only memorial shall be in prosaic letter-press.

How she, in her maiden days, interested a Sunday class, I never knew. Her father, a widower and a hand-loom weaver, was the superintendent of a country Sunday school. Education being out of their reach, devotion and perseverance had to suffice. In due time, she yielded to the attentions of a son of the soil.

As a motherless child, he ran about the lanes, barefooted and uncared for, until charitably taken in hand by a doctor to help on his little farm. Out-door work developed his physique, and he became the pride of the country side. Robust and with manly bearing, no wonder the gentle maiden was attracted by him, and his persistent wooing was rewarded.

In other respects, also, they were unlike; she was devoted to her father's faith, whilst he was careless and indifferent, taking no interest in religious institutions.

Shortly after marriage, he changed his occupation and brought his young wife to the outskirts of a city, where, but for her influence, they would have drifted into the masses of non-churchgoers. Faithful, however, to her devotional training, she sought the nearest place of worship, and quietly and regularly attended. Thither her husband, with true chivalry, would sometimes accompany her. Gradually he became a regular attendant. And within twelve months he was pressed into service as Sunday school superintendent, a position he held to a ripe old age.

To-day, I recall a white-haired man—one of nature's gentlemen—leading the school, punctual to the last, respected and beloved by all. And, in the background, was the loving, helpful wife, with her never-failing sympathy and encouragement.

His family was a large one and his daily work arduous, but he never slackened. The cottagers on the road marked the growth of his children as they in turn trotted by their father's side on the way to Sunday school. Time passed, and these little ones developed into office bearers; and the grand-children are following their example.

Who shall set bounds to the influence of this one humble, rustic maiden?

AN ALLEGORY AND A PRAYER

WALTER RUSSELL

I dreamed that I had stumblingly journeyed through a dark forest, when suddenly I entered a clearing where there were no trees or undergrowth. As I proceeded I saw a light in the distance, and, approaching the building from which it emanated, I looked through a window, and saw in the midst of a number of children, a beautiful young woman reading from a book. The beauty of her face was not that of physical outline, but from within there shone through her features a radiance such as I had not seen before. The face was not perfectly illuminated for there were parts which still remained in shadow. I looked again, and in the face of the little ones I saw somewhat of the same illumination—a reflection of her own, but less pronounced. Here I saw one face radiant with joy, and there, one which was darkened and sad. Here were the features of one reflecting the same light but dimly, and there a face so darkened as to be scarcely visible amid the surrounding gloom.

As the years passed, I saw the reader's face growing more radiantly beautiful, and the young faces in larger measure reflecting the glory of her own. I saw too, that some wandered away and passed into the woods. For a little while they appeared but as glow-worms among the brambles, and then their light faded and I saw them no more. They had yielded to the beckoning of unseen powers, and as each disappeared I looked up into the sky, expecting to see a dense cloud passing

before the sun, for a deep shadow passed over that radiant face.

Again I looked, and some I saw who seemed to be drawn alternatively into the rays of light, and into the shadows—they struggled against the allurements of the shadowy groves—they came out into the light—they went back into the darkness, but still the radiant figure beckoned them, and never ceased to throw around them, as it were, a halo, which she in her turn did but reflect from another. For as I looked beyond where she sat I saw One standing whose figure was wholly radiant. I saw for the first time a perfect face, because for the first time I saw one through whom, the pure light shone unhindered, and in whom there was no shadow. I looked beyond this shining One, and saw that he too did but reflect the light, which, streaming from the heavens came from the Source of all Light. This light shone freely upon all but seemed as it were, focussed in that all-radiant figure, who transmitted it through the reader of the book into the lives of the little ones. He ever remained a clear and shadowless figure—in her the shadows came and went—the light increased and decreased—but the confidence of victory was with the light. I saw some of her companions daily growing more beautiful, but when others wandered into the dark paths of unworthy pleasures I saw a falling tear flash in the light of her radiant face, and the tear fell upon the book like a diamond torn from its setting. But when as the years passed she saw the youths and maidens pass through the forest thickets with light undimmed, and heart unsullied, she shed tears of joy, for she knew that their allurements had no power over them. And as they came out from the forest, and passed in a long procession before her, the open space became full of floral beauty, for the seed she had sown had brought forth the blossoms of faithfulness, integrity, honesty, thoroughness, conscientiousness, affection, patience and love. And the purest joy of her heart, and the highest recompense of her labours were realised as she looked upon the leading figure of the procession, for

> 'A little child walked knee-deep in
> The magic of the place;
> Beauty was dreaming in her eyes,
> And truth had shaped her face.'

We thank thee, O Father, that amidst the dark groves of unworthy pleasures and temptations, thou hast given us Sunday schools and meeting places wherein we may unitedly enjoy thy pure presence. Grant that as we gather around our teachers we may receive into our hearts through them thine illuminating spirit, as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. Enable us so to live that we may ever increase in light, and that the shadows of sin and error may no more mar our spirits. Help us that we may so grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Saviour, that without stumbling we may walk amid the brambles and undergrowth of the forest, that our light may never grow dim, and that in our day and generation we may resist the power of evil, and keep our spirits unsullied by wrong.

We thank thee, O God, for the men and women whose lives are given up for our good. May they in increasing measure realise thy presence with them, and when their lives seem to them unworthy the work to which thou hast called them, and the attainment of their ideals seems impossible, give to them a vision of the souls which they are making for thee, the lives which they are beautifying, the homes which they are sweetening by their labours, and let them weary not in well-doing. And as they labour with a single eye to thy glory may their whole bodies be full of light. And enable us, O Father, so to live that our young lives may become as fragrant as opening rosebuds refreshed by the morning dews. Go before us in all our wanderings, so that even in the valley of the shadow, in thy light we may see light. AMEN.

Do not go to them [the poor] as the representatives of the richer classes, to keep them in order. . . . Stir up the poor man to be active for his own improvement, and teach him that the power of improvement is communicated as liberally to him as to his prosperous neighbour. . . . Cherish among them [the poor] the domestic and benevolent affections. Whoever knows the poor, must know how greatly the aspect of their abodes would be changed, and what a large proportion of their sufferings would be removed by the substitution of a true love, for selfishness, passion and envy, for unkind words and unkind deeds. . . . I insist on this because it is the common doctrine of the day that the poor are to be raised by being taught to save, to hoard, to economise their scanty earnings. By all means teach prudence, but do not make the poor anxious, selfish, sordid.—*Channing.*

BELIEF IN GOD

SYDNEY H. MELLONE, M.A., D.Sc.

In our last contribution to this subject (see SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY, No. 3) we tried to suggest, emphasise and illustrate the thought of a Great Plan or Purpose, gradually wrought out through the ages of history, and still in process. The world is not yet made: it is in the making. We illustrated this by showing that the acts of men—good, bad, or indifferent—are made to work out into results which may not only be quite different from the intentions of the agents, but even be beyond their power to conceive. Good men by their good deeds have 'builded better than they knew.' The bad deeds of bad men are made to contribute to ends unperceived by the agents and often quite opposed to their purpose. The tragedies and heroic sufferings of human life, and its failures and disappointments, are made to contribute to the good of the world. As in the case of Columbus, a man may put his heart and soul into working for something that seems to him good; and fail, yet in trying and failing, he may contribute to a greater good than he knew—far greater than his dream and desire.

In all history, two of the bitterest human disappointments have probably been the expectation of the Jews that their own nation was to be exalted as the supreme source of light and leading for the peoples of the world, and the expectation of the Apostolic Church that Christ would soon return to earth in person, to the victory of the faithful and the confusion of his foes. The Jewish hope was disappointed, but through that hope the House of Israel did a greater work for the world than they knew. What was there in the Jewish dream of the glorification of a narrow people, to be compared to the reality of the invisible Kingdom in our midst, sprung, as it mainly has, from the stream of spiritual health and healing that flowed from the Man of Nazareth—the last and greatest of Israel's prophetic sons? What was the hope of the Master's speedy return to earth to crush the persecutors of the faithful, in comparison with the real coming of his spirit in the minds and hearts of his disciples?

In every case the surpassing greatness of the later event is the outcome of a human dream, held and believed in with an intensity which only grew deeper as the events of the world seemed to shriek against it, yet killed at last by the inexorable facts, and turned to vaster issues by the Power who has all the worlds in keeping.

For, indeed, the Great Plan and Purpose, whose signs we can detect in the history of the world, is surely the work of a Great Mind. We can use no other words to express our meaning: a Mind whose width and depth and resources are great in proportion to the width and depth and richness of the Great Plan. We know that we are partly wrong in using such words as the *mind* or *will* of the Power whose work is the purpose of the world. We are partly wrong because our ordinary words are being used to express something too great for them fully to express. All our beliefs and all our speech concerning God—however wise and thoughtful we try to be—are partly wrong. They are 'provisional'; but they are not useless. *They are far more true than any unbelief or silence.*

It is true that people sometimes degrade the Name by speaking of God as if he were a big man in the next street. They use the Name as if it stood for a stupendous mechanic or glorified schoolmaster. We shall not fall into these habits if we always remember that the Name means first of all the Supreme Purpose which is being worked out in the world. And because we see so many real signs of that Purpose, we try to express our thought of the Power behind the Purpose by using words borrowed from our ideas of our own purposes and plans, for we have no better words to use.

We appealed to the Cross of Christ to learn how it may be that one great part of the Supreme Purpose is the creation, through the stress and strain of life, of *persons*, men and women good enough, wise enough, and strong enough to help in making the world better. From this point we now proceed. This means that not only is the world still in the making; not only is the process of creation always going on; but *we have a real share in the work of creation.* It is God's work, but it is our work too.

Does this seem mysterious? Not if we

remember that God and man are not two separate kinds of beings. God is not man, and man is not God; but they are not separate *in the way in which two human beings are separate.* Not God without man, and not man without God: this must be the guide of our thinking on this great theme.

The suggestion which we have made as to the working out of the Divine Plan and Purpose have been illustrated by cases in which man is more like a blind tool or instrument, than an ally and helper, of the Eternal Power. The facts of history and experience seem to show that, as regards all the greatest Purposes which are being realised in the world, man is such an unconscious instrument. Now if we took this to be *the whole truth,* we should reach an idea of belief in the power of God as so omnipotent, so almighty, that there would be no room for any real contribution *from the side of man.* Such is the logical outcome of the Calvinistic doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Such is the belief that seems to prevail among the followers of Mohammed. A pestilence, for example, begins to spread; and they do not attempt to combat it, but resign themselves to the thought 'it is the will of Allah'; '*kismet*—it is fate.' If such a conception of divine omnipotence were the whole truth, it would deaden our sense of duty and paralyse our energy. But if there is any value at all in what we have said, this extreme view of the Divine Power is wrong; and to say that man is a tool or instrument of that Power is *part* of the truth and not the whole. It is one side of the truth only. What is the other side?

I answer in the fine and forcible words of Dr. John Hunter, of Glasgow: 'The Divine Power in the world is not an abstract, impersonal energy, not an unembodied and wandering spirit. God in the world creating and perfecting it means his Power and Spirit dwelling in and working through industrious, righteous, faithful beneficent lives. *The unit of power in the world* is not God isolated from man, and not man isolated from God; but God and man united, working purposely and continuously together; God quickening and inspiring man, and man opening his life to be a part of the Divine Life of the world.'

After pointing out the simplicity with which the first followers of Jesus understood the Master's Life to represent the union of God and man in purpose and work—and after quoting from the Fourth Gospel ('My Father worketh hitherto, and I work'—'the works that I do are the Father's who sends me') Dr. Hunter continues: 'What confusions and miseries have come of our searching and effort to find God in the world outside of and apart from man; from placing God and man over against each other as though their spheres of activity were separated by the chasm of an infinite difference! Deity has been conceived as a majestic being dwelling apart from the universe, overseeing it and intervening now and again by special acts, but working as a rule in profound and mighty isolation, outside of and apart from the world, outside and apart from his children. Men have sometimes wrought and fought against the evil of the world as if they had no divine companion at their side, and felt no need of any other help than their own. Again, at other times, they have imagined that God would do it all, that they had no part in the Divine work, that it was their place to stand by and wait and pray for a human redemption, or a golden age, or a millennium that will come without their aid and co-operation. But it is not man apart from God who is to build up and redeem the earth, nor is it God apart from man, but man and God working together.'

If we must speak of the 'omnipotence' of God at all, we must remember that we are using words carelessly. The unit of power is God and man united. Is God omnipotent apart from man? To answer *yes* would be to fall into Calvinistic fatalism. Can man 'do all things' without God? To answer *yes* would be to go to the other extreme, and, like the followers of Auguste Comte, make a God of humanity. None the less, we affirm that man has a real part to play in the course of events—a part so real that it may be called 'a share in the work of creating the world.'

In a fourth and concluding contribution we shall try to show the immense practical importance of this thought.

A Suggestion.

What has been said upon this great subject of 'Belief in God' has, of course, been addressed not to people whose minds are already made up—one way or the

other—on these questions, and who think the last word has already been said; but to those who want to feel and think their way towards clearer light. It may be assumed that most readers of this magazine belong to the latter class. What has been said in these columns, in the last three numbers of the magazine, on this great subject, may perhaps have lightened difficulties in some readers' minds, but at the same time it may have suggested other difficulties. Readers who feel that this is so, are asked to write to Rev. S. H. Mellone, at 10, Hartington Gardens, Edinburgh, stating the difficulties which they feel, especially such as are connected with what has been said in this magazine, but also other difficulties of their own. So far as possible, Dr. Mellone will discuss the questions in these columns, without mentioning the names of the writers of any of the letters. If there should be many letters, it will of course not be possible to refer *directly* to every one; but in any case the discussion of a certain number of such difficulties, in the form in which they have occurred to teachers, inquirers, and other thoughtful persons, can hardly fail to be of service to many. Letters should be sent within four weeks from the date of this present number of the SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY.

To understand that the language of the Bible is fluid, passing and literary; not rigid, fixed and scientific; is the first step towards a right understanding of the Bible. But to take this very first step, some experience of how men have thought and expressed themselves, and some flexibility of spirit, are necessary; and this is culture. . . . Only true culture can give us this right interpretation of the Bible; so that if conduct is, as it is, inextricably bound up with the Bible and the right interpretation of it, then the importance of culture becomes unspeakable. For if conduct is necessary (and there is nothing so necessary), culture is necessary.

When we say that culture is TO KNOW THE BEST THAT HAS BEEN THOUGHT AND SAID IN THE WORLD, we imply that, for culture, a system directly tending to this end is necessary in our reading.

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And our reading being so without purpose as it is, nothing can be truer than what Butler says, that really, in general, no part of our time is more idly spent than the time spent in reading. Still, culture is indispensably necessary, and culture is READING; but reading with a purpose to guide it, and with system. He does a good work who does anything to help this; indeed, it is the one essential service now to be rendered to education.—'*Literature and Dogma*,' *by Matthew Arnold.*

A PRIEST OF TRUTH

E. ROSALIND LEE

In a secluded corner of a remote part of France stands the town of Tréguier. Just as Brittany seems to belong to an older and more dreamy world than the rest of France, so Tréguier is one of the most dreamy and old-world towns in Brittany. Approached by road from Paimpol it is first seen about three miles away. Thence on a hot afternoon in June it appeared as a cluster of spires and grey roofs apparently floating on a sea of white mist. To the left rose a short spire, which proved to be the Tower of St. Michael, once the centre of the aristocratic quarter of the town, now only the home of countless jackdaws. To the right a more modern spire pierced the haze; that was Plougiel Church, across the river from Tréguier proper, and standing in so prominent a position that fishermen six miles away at sea steer their course by it. In the centre the tower of the chief church in Tréguier tapered up into a splendid spire studded in all directions with windows bathed in sunlight. After that one glimpse the town disappeared from view, as the road wound down the long hill to the bridge over the river. Down that long hill and over the bridge, there is in June a constant stream of creaking country carts filled with sacks of new potatoes. Day after day at this season the same thing goes on. Carts come from all directions to the quay; there two or three small steamers are waiting to be loaded with potatoes, which are taken across the Channel to the English markets. The supply of potatoes seems inexhaustible, and the English demand apparently equally so. In their seasons other vegetables follow the same course. The small port of Tréguier is about five miles from the open sea, just above the junction of two small tidal rivers.

The quay is the busiest part of the town. In addition to the few ships, a train arrives here three times a day, a recent link with the outer world which is a constant source of interest to the inhabitants. Here, too, the cattle and pig markets are held, and an occasional fair, at which times the place is so crowded as to be almost impassable; caravans and stalls are stationed so close to the railway

lines that passengers can easily touch them as they go by. One or two steep narrow streets lead up from the quay to the large square in the centre of old Tréguier. This upper town appears to have gone to sleep in the Middle Ages and never to have awakened. Dominating the whole town and taking up one side of the square, is the principal church, once a cathedral, but many years ago shorn of that honour. Every quarter of an hour the bell rings out from the tower, sweet mellow tones reminding the inhabitants that time passes, but the sound is so soothing and deliberate that it only serves to emphasise the peace and quiet of the place and the leisurely habits of the people. It calls up sacred memories of the past, and makes everything connected with the present day seem incongruous. Inside, the precincts tell the same story—the great bare building with its lofty Gothic arches echoing the steps of the pious as they go to 'make a vow to St. Yves' at his gorgeous tomb, and particularly the beautiful cloisters, once paced by monks, now only visited by a few stray tourists. Here in the middle of the grass plot, facing the towers of the church, stands a statue of St. Yves, the patron of Truth and Learning, the poor man's friend, the patron saint *par excellence* of the Bretons and of the people of Tréguier in particular. It is around him that all the local legends cling, and to whom the pious still refer all their joys and sorrows. One of the most famous of the Breton Festivals or 'Pardons' is held in his honour. On these occasions Tréguier is thronged with 'the faithful' who come from miles round to visit the shrine of their Saint. There is hardly a cottage in the district which does not contain some picture or figure of St. Yves, and every other person one meets in the streets is named Yvonne.

In this 'haunt of ancient peace,' one thing alone recalls the nineteenth century. In a prominent position in the square stands a statue of Ernest Rénan, one of the pioneers of the Liberal Religious Movement in France. Here in this old world city was born the man to whom Napoleon III. dared not give a Professorship owing to his advanced opinions on religion, and whose writings, especially his Life of Jesus, gained a European reputation, and were read in corners and in secret places by the bolder orthodox, only in the open by avowed heretics.

A few hundred yards away, almost within sight of the cloisters, stands the modest cottage in which Ernest Rénan was born in 1823. A brass tablet has recently been put up to identify it. Here he lived during most of his childhood. His father, a master fisherman, died at sea when Ernest was five, and left his family penniless. Besides an elder brother, Ernest had a sister—Henriette, who from his earliest youth was his special protector and companion. At one time she had thoughts of entering one of the convents, whose high grey walls are so prominent a feature in Tréguier, and it was only care for Ernest that prevented her from doing so. It was a sad day for both when Henriette left home to earn her living as governess in a school in Paris. While she was toiling there to pay off the debts left by their father, Ernest was breathing in the intensely Catholic atmosphere of his home. When he was only six his devout mother had taken him to the shrine of St. Yves to be placed under his particular protection. Soon afterwards he began to attend the excellent seminary kept by the priests in the town. Here from the time he was seven he attended day after day almost without a break for eight years. He early showed a taste for study, but his talents being of the plodding, persevering kind, they did not at first attract special notice. He was more bookish than brilliant, and his mind moved slowly like his limbs which were already affected by rheumatism. He was very happy and devoted to his masters. Many years afterwards, when he had outgrown much of their teaching, he still spoke of them with great affection and gratitude. 'They taught me the love of truth, the respect for reason, the earnestness of life. And in these I have never varied . . . . I believe no longer that the Christian dogma is the supernatuaral epitome of the sum of human knowledge: but I do believe, I do still believe that our existence is the most frivolous of things, unless we conceive it as a grand and perpetual duty. Old and dear masters . . . I have not been as unfaithful to you as you think! At heart I am still your disciple.' It seemed the most natural thing in the world that he should look forward to following

in their footsteps, for it was taken as a matter of course at the school that the specially gifted or studious boys should become priests, and it was also his mother's dearest wish. In the summer of 1838 he took all the prizes. Of course Henriette was told of this; she confided her delight in the school doctor, who spoke to some of his friends about this Breton prodigy. The result was that a brilliant ecclesiastic, M. Dupanloup, was so much impressed that he commanded that the boy should be sent to him at once to attend his seminary in Paris.

Ernest was fifteen and a half when he was thus suddenly uprooted from his native heath. When he first arrived in Paris, true Breton as he was, he nearly died of homesickness. It was only the presence of Henriette that could rouse him from his melancholy. The change had been too abrupt from the meditative solitude of Tréguier to the busy world of Paris. There seemed little or nothing in common between the simple faith of his former teachers and the brilliant dialectics prevailing in the Paris Seminary. 'I discovered,' says Rénan, 'that there was a contemporary literature. I learned with stupor that knowledge was not a privilege of the Church. My masters at Tréguier had been far more advanced in Latin and mathematics than my new professors. But they dwelt, sealed in a catacomb, underground. Here in Paris, the air of the outer world circulated freely. New ideas dawned upon me. I awoke to the meaning of the words talent, fame, celebrity. A new ideal swam into my ken. This perhaps was what I had longed for so vainly, so vaguely in the dim cathedral aisles of Tréguier.'

For seven years Rénan continued his studies in Paris, ever becoming more absorbed in them. Ostensibly he was preparing for the priesthood, and for a time this still seemed to him the noblest vocation. With his early training, and his taste for seclusion, such an attitude of mind was almost inevitable. It was very slowly and reluctantly that he came to the conclusion that he could not honestly enter the Catholic Church. Soon after he came to Paris, Henriette obtained an appointment as governess in Poland. She was away for ten years, and it is in the letters that passed between them during her absence that we can best trace the development of his ideas. Henriette had already begun to think for herself, and had won her way to an earnest, reasonable faith. She could see that her brother's mind was working in the same direction, and she dreaded lest he should take the irrevocable step before he realised all it meant. She resisted the temptation of opening the question with him, but urged him not to be in too great a hurry, and even sent him some of her hard earned savings to make him independent of the Church. Meanwhile his masters in Paris were doing their best to make things easy for him, and to stifle his doubts, for they had no wish to lose their distinguished pupil.

In a very troubled frame of mind he spent the long vacation of 1845 at Tréguier. There it seemed harder than ever to relinquish the ideal of his childhood, and he had not the heart to tell his mother of his scruples. On his return to Paris, however, decision was forced upon him. To his surprise he found himself appointed a Professor at the Carmelite College. To accept the post would be a tacit acquiescence in Catholic beliefs. He did not feel justified in doing so. The same evening, having explained his position to his superiors, he left the seminary of S. Sulpice and took a lodging near by.

For a time he kept in touch with his masters, taking a post as usher in a Jesuit College with their full permission, but this arrangement soon proved unsatisfactory, and in November he finally severed all connection with the Catholic Church and took a humble position as parlour boarder in a small school. He felt very lonely at first, cut off from his old companions, but he found a friend in one of his pupils, M. Berthelot. 'We had the same religion,' says Rénan, 'And that religion was the worship of Truth.'

Thus Ernest Rénan entered the ranks of the Seekers after Truth and became one of her most ardent and earnest devotees. There is not scope in this article to give a detailed account of his life, much less of his writings. For the most part he led the life of a student, earning his living by teaching, and slowly coming to prominence in the learned world by his writings. Although for a time the scenes of 1848 turned his thoughts to modern politics,

this was but a passing phase; it was the past that really attracted him. In 1851 Henriette returned from Poland. She had paid off her father's debts and brought enough savings to set up house with her brother. Her practical, sane influence was invaluable, keeping in check the dreaminess and abstract vagueness to which her brother was sometimes prone. Everything he wrote was read aloud to her and she was never satisfied till all was accurate and true. With one work her name will always be particularly associated; the *Life of Jesus* is dedicated 'To the pure soul of my sister Henriette, who died at Byblos, on the 24th September, 1861.' She had accompanied him on an archæological expedition to Phoenicia, and they had had a delightful time together in Syria and Palestine. Driven to the hills by the terrible heat, the pair took up their abode at Ghazir, and in this peaceful spot Ernest began his picturesque account of 'The Incomparable Man,' a work he had long meditated. A New Testament and Josephus were his only library, but the place itself and his recent travels in Palestine were more to him than any books. Henriette was, as usual, his confidante and critic. Every evening they talked over what he had just written, and planned out the next day's task. Some chapters still remained to be written when the time arrived for them to return to France. While they were waiting for the steamer both fell ill of a mysterious fever. Henriette succumbed to the disease and was buried in the vault belonging to their host at Byblos. Ernest felt her death very deeply, for never was a man blessed with a wiser, more devoted sister. Save for this tragic episode, Rénan's domestic life was a very happy one. A few years before his sister's death he had married a very capable, sweet-tempered woman, niece of the Dutch painter, Ary Scheffer, at whose house he met her. She made him an excellent wife, looking after his worldly wants, in which he himself took little concern, and also sympathising with his aims and ideals.

The days of the torture chamber and of martyrdom by fire are happily gone by in civilised Christian countries, but intolerance and bitterness remain. Rénan had to bear his share of nineteenth century persecution. In 1857 the Chair of Hebrew and Syro-Chaldaic languages at the College of France became vacant, a position to which Rénan had long aspired, and for which he had shown himself eminently fitted, but for several years the Catholic party succeeded in keeping the Chair unoccupied. When he was at last elected in 1862 the Catholics were wildly indignant. In his inaugural lecture an unfortunate reference to the humanity of Jesus created an uproar. The Emperor seized this excuse 'in the interests of public order' to transfer the obnoxious professor to a small post at the Imperial Library. Rénan made a dignified protest, refusing the new post and maintaining his right to the Professorship, but with no effect. The episode threw him politically into the Republican camp, and for a time he was one of the most popular members of that party. He even consented to be a candidate at the General Election in 1869. It is not surprising that the high-minded scholar was defeated at the polls in a district whose electors consisted chiefly of wealthy farmers.

In politics as in religion he showed that he had the courage of his own opinions. One of his most cherished dreams was of a Union between France and Germany, and when this ideal was rudely shattered by the war of 1870, he raised his voice in earnest protest. His noble sentiments were hardly taken seriously by the enemy, and created fierce opposition amongst his countrymen. When someone said 'All is over; There is nothing left save to rear a generation to avenge us,' Renan replied, 'No! No vengeance! Perish France rather! Perish the idea of country! Higher still is the Kingdom of Duty and Reason.' Perhaps it was not unnatural that even his dearest friends could not appreciate the attitude of the idealist philosopher. Saddened by the course of events he again retired into his study, and in writing Recollections of his youth in Brittany he regained some of his old peace of mind. He longed to visit his old haunts, and at last in the summer of 1884 returned to Tréguier after an absence of nearly forty years. He was pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome he received, and was pursuaded to take a house on the coast near by. Every year he returned to this quiet spot, and was amused to find himself looked upon almost as a prophet. The peasants knew he was

famous without knowing why. The men called him the Great Republican, but the women were inclined to think him a Saint! Meanwhile France was at last beginning to appreciate the genius of the learned Breton. In 1879 he had been elected an Academician, and henceforward honours were showered upon him; finally, in 1884, he was appointed head of the College of France. This post he held till his death eight years later, and no one could have been more conscientious in performing his professional duties. No amount of popularity could deprive him of his simplicity and charm, nor turn him from his devotion to the quest for Truth. 'At heart he was still a priest, a man set apart, the priest of Truth.'

Shortly after his death, the State erected the monument in his honour in the square at Tréguier, and the street leading from his birth-place to the cloisters was re-named Rue Rénan. This public recognition of the heretic was so much resented by the pious Catholics of the neighbourhood, that they set up a huge Calvary as a protest. But, after all, was not Ernest Rénan a true follower of their patron Saint? Surely St. Yves, the patron of Truth and Learning would not have wholly disapproved of the man who made it his aim 'to dedicate himself to Truth, whatsoever she be, wheresoever she lead him, no matter what the sacrifice she may demand.'

BAPTISMAL HYMN

R. NICOL CROSS, M.A.

O God, who madest all
The wonder and the might
Which every mind appal;
Written on day and night.

Who calledst forth the sun
From darkness infinite,
And from the chaos won
Order and law and right.

Whose finger touched the earth,
With its surprise of power;
And miracle got birth,
And beauty had its hour.

Thou madest also this,
The frailest and the best;
And thine immortal kiss
On this child-soul doth rest.

Made for thyself, by thee,
We take it, and would ask
Thy love in it to see;
For it our sacred task.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

XIV.—Boys and Girls of the Bible

Jephthah's Daughter (Judges xi)

H. FISHER SHORT

Between this lesson and the one that preceded it, one or two points of contrast may be noted. Our first lesson dealt with a human sacrifice which was prevented, our second deals with human sacrifice that was made. Our first lesson was about a boy with a curious name, our second is about a girl, or a maiden, whose name is unknown. But, though nameless, that is so far as our knowledge is concerned, Jephthah's daughter will long be remembered as a brave girl, a dutiful child, and a national heroine. Let us recount the story of her heroism. The story is bound up with the doings of her father, and it will be necesasry to traverse the course of events immediately preceding the appearance of the girl upon the scene we are about to contemplate First of all, a word about Jephthah. He appears to have been a rather fine type of man. He seems to have been both statesmanlike and soldierly; both an affectionate parent and a man of such real integrity that he could sacrifice his dearest treasure rather than go back upon his word. True, he had been banished from the land of his birth, and, surrounded by a band of 'vain fellows,' probably followed the life of a homeless freebooter; but he is described as a 'mighty man of valour,' and such he proved himself to be, as the following story shows. 'It came to pass,' we read, 'that the children of Ammon made war against Israel.' Now Israel had a strong army of fighting men, but there was one important thing they had not, and that was a leader. There was a man, however, well fitted to fill the role. That man was none other than the wandering plunderer, Jephthah. And so the sons of Israel sent some of the old men of Gilead to persuade Jephthah to become their commander. 'Come and be our chief,' they said, 'that we may fight with the children of Ammon.' This was a little too much for Jephthah the Gileadite. 'Did ye not hate me,' he exclaimed, 'and drive me out of my father's house? And why are ye come to me now when ye are in distress?'

These were awkward questions, and the elders shrewdly evaded them, and, instead, promised the valiant man that if he would lead them against the Ammonites he should be the head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. This was distinctly encouraging; but Jephthah was evidently as prudential as he was brave. He therefore repeated their generous promise in the form of a question, saying, 'If ye bring me home again to fight with the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?' To which they replied, 'The Lord shall be witness before us; surely according to thy word so will we do."

Satisfied with the conditions, Jephthah returned with the elders to his native Gilead, and the people proclaimed the erstwhile freebooter their head and chief.

The new leader now turned his attention to the cause of his elevation—the threatened attack of the children of Ammon. Warrior though he was, he first of all tried to settle the quarrel peaceably. But the king of the Ammonites was adamant and refused to yield to the pressure of kindness and reason Jephthah brought to bear upon him. Nothing remained, therefore, but to fight; and so gathering his forces together, the leader of the Israelites went forth to meet the stubborn foe. And here we come upon an incident upon which depends our knowledge of the heroine. Save for the following occurence, we might not have heard of Jephthah's daughter, and this lesson had not been written. Before the battle, Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, saying, 'If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.' Having made this solemn vow to his God, the warrior chief led his men against the Ammonites, large numbers of whom were slaughtered, and the remainder utterly subdued. The fighting finished, Jephthah now returned in triumph to Mizpah, where he had made his home. As he drew near to the house, a number of maidens came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances, and at their head was his daughter—his only child. And, remembering his vow, he tore his clothing and cried 'Alas my daughter! thou hast brought me very low and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back.' The girl received this sentence of death, for such it was, like the daughter of a soldier and a hero. To her sorrow-stricken father she calmly said, 'Thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord: do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth: forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies even of the children of Ammon.' How the father's heart must have warmed towards his child! How proud he must have felt of her courage, her patriotism, her integrity! She craved one small boon before the terrible vow should be kept—she begged to be allowed to go away with her companions for two months to bewail her early death. And the father granted her simple request. At the end of the two months she returned from her mountain retreat, and Jephthah faithfully kept the vow he had so solemnly vowed to the God of the Israelites. The details of the sacrifice are not given in the Bible story, but a modern writer, aided by his knowledge of the way human sacrifices were made, has given us the following imaginary account of the closing scene of the brave girl's life. The victim, crowned with flowers, was led round the altar with music and song in honour of Yahweh (Jehovah). She met her cruel fate without shrinking. But who shall say how sick at heart her father was, when he struck the fatal blow with his own hand, and saw the blood of his darling child poured out upon the sacred stone, while the body was burned upon the altar! Thus Yahweh received his own, and the price of victory was paid.' (See Bible for Young People. Vol. III.).

What can we learn from this old story? One important lesson, surely, is that of thankfulness. We ought to be profoundly thankful that we belong to a people who have left far behind the primitive superstitions and cruel practices associated with the religion of the early Israelites. The people to whom Jephthah and his courageous daughter belonged were a barbarous people who could preserve

their tribal life only by fighting and exploitation. Hence their religious ideas and rites were of a somewhat savage character. They believed God to be a despot whose power over them was absolute. But they conceived of him as a kind of larger, stronger man whom they could easily please or displease, and they, therefore, sought in their religious exercises to win the favour or to turn away the wrath of God. In a word, their religion consisted largely in bribing the Almighty.

Happily, between their day and ours, there stretches a wide interval, and, during the intervening centuries, men have been learning to understand God and his will more clearly. Thanks to God's revelations of himself in the minds and hearts of saintly men, we do not believe that such a promise as Jephthah so rashly made would ensure divine assistance in time of war, or in any other time. And we certainly do not believe that God requires loving parents to sacrifice their boys and girls as burnt offerings. But the lesson of gratitude is not the only lesson to be learned from the story of Jephthah's daughter. There are at least three other lessons we might take to heart. The first is courage. Called upon to die, this maiden of Gilead faced the ordeal without flinching. Not one of the boys and girls for whom this lesson is prepared is likely to be called upon to meet death in the flush and bloom of health. Fatal accidents are possible, but none will be brought face to face with death as was Jephthah's daughter. And yet, in the life of every boy and girl, there is room for moral heroism. To speak the plain truth is difficult, when the plausible half-truth or the downright untruth may avert censure or punishment. When unsuspected of some wrong action he has committed, it is not the easiest thing in the world for a boy to come forward and 'make a clean breast' of the matter. Even when conscious of having given grave offence, for a proud spirited lad or a highly strung girl, it is often an extremely difficult thing to apologise, or to say the simple words, 'I am sorry.' But it is in just these and similar circumstances that little heroes and heroines are revealed.

Another lesson is that of self-sacrifice. At this time of day, we do not think that it was necessary for the fresh young life of our heroine to be sacrificed in the manner it was; but Jephthah did, and the brave daughter did, and for that reason we hold them in honour. But we do believe in self-sacrifice. Indeed, self-sacrifice we conceive to be the very essence of Christianity. 'If any man will be my disciple,' said Jesus, 'let him deny himself.' And the Master meant this for boys and girls as well as men and women. What did he mean? He did not mean that people should simply go without things—that girls should go without sweets and dolls and pretty trinkets, that boys should go without apples and marbles and cricket bats. What he did mean was that the real genuine Christian is one who is not selfish, but who, instead of always trying to get the best and the most of everything for himself, will make sacrifice of his time, his means, his comfort, his ability, for the sake of others who may be in need.

The last lesson we may mention is that of patriotism, that is, love for one's homeland. Jephthah's daughter willingly laid down her life because she believed she was paying the price of the help God had given to her own people. The boys and girls of the British Empire ought to find inspiration in the patriotism of the maiden of Israel. If she could seal, with her young blood, her affection for the few square miles which were her homeland, how much more ought Britain's sons and daughters to be filled with pride and love concerning our own glorious empire, the like of which has never been known in the world's history? True, it is far from perfect. True, there are within its boundaries many wrongs to be righted, many blots to be removed, many social sores to be healed. But, it is also true, that its ideals are Christian, that its noblest representatives stand for freedom, for peace, for justice, and for magnanimity.

Messages from the Flowers

EDGAR THACKRAY, M.A., Ph.D.

Introductory. Lessons on this subject would be most appropriate in the springtime or at a harvest festival, but in the winter we usually manage to gather some flowers about us, both in the church and at home, so that the messages they bring may be considered of perennial interest. The

teacher of a young class should bring some favourite bloom and pretend to hold a conversation with it. If possible the scholars should be induced to answer the questions put to the flower. In older classes the questions might be addressed directly to the scholars.

We are told that St. Francis of Assisi was fond of talking to the birds, calling them 'little brothers,' and if we were better linguists *we* might do the same, and even hold conversations with the flowers, too. If we tried to translate flower language into English we should probably get the following messages :—

XV.—Message of Joy

THE poet Wordsworth has caught this message from them, for he says :—

> 'And 'tis my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes.'

Every flower 'breathes' forth a word of joy. It doesn't shout it, nor even speak it, but simply breathes it out in a whisper.

'There is no speech nor language : their voice is not heard,' and yet, like the stars and the heavens, they quietly 'declare the glory of God.' What is 'glory'? Well, it always suggests to me something more than we could have expected, more than we could just manage to get along with. Laughter has been defined as a 'sudden glory,' that comes over you. The laughter of the flowers is a continuous glory. We could get along in a way, *i.e.*, we could manage to exist without laughter and glory, without heavens and flowers ; but seeing they have been freely given to us we should be foolish to try.

Ruskin has reckoned that 'every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered if, once in three days or thereabouts, a great ugly black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning or evening mist for dew ; and instead of this there is not a moment in any day of our lives when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for *us*, and intended for our perpetual pleasure.'

With equal force one could say that every essential purpose of the *flowers*, in regard to food or physic, might, so far as we know, be answered by a few specimens of similar shape and colour without the extravagant profusion and variety that actually exist. Again, may we not be 'quite certain it is all done for *us*, and intended for our perpetual pleasure' ?

Thus the joy message of the flower is a two-fold one :—

(1) My life is a joy to me.

(2) Let me help to make yours a joy to you.

The flower tells us it has entered upon what Browning calls the 'wild joys of living,' and at the same time invites us to become a partner of those joys.

With elder scholars it might be interesting to raise such questions as: What degree of truth is there in attributing joy to a flower ? What is the connection between flower life and human life ? Why do we pass so easily from joy to beauty ? Is everything that gives us joy beautiful, and does beauty always give us joy ? How far right was Keats in saying 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever ? "

For some working theory of what beauty is, let the teacher consult Professor Santayana's 'Sense of Beauty' (Scribner).

Another line of thought for elder scholars would be to assume a general understanding of the nature of beauty as typified by the flower, and then proceed to ask how far beauty leads us in the direction of a theology. (Armstrong's 'God and the Soul,' chapter iv., will be a good guide here.)

For elder scholars of a less speculative turn of mind this first message of the flower might be taken in the form of the reflection :—If 'every *flower* enjoys the air it breathes,' it is surely a pity that this cannot be said of every *man*. Why is this so ? Then the teacher may take a rest and listen to the opinions of the class, *i.e.*, if he has previously made up his mind about the Houses and Towns Planning Bill and about such matters as the communising of houses.

The scientifically minded scholars will remember that the air enjoyed by the flower is the kind which is poisonous to a man, and that the breathing of flowers makes the air purer for human beings.

For a most delightful blending of science and religion see the sermon on flowers by W. C. Gannett in his 'Year of Miracle.' (G. H. Ellis, Boston, U.S.A.)

XVI.—Message of Content

Although

'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air,'

we never hear any complaints, but only messages of deep content. When the flower sees no chance of 'improving its position,' it begins to improve itself, and in the end fits itself most admirably to what at first appeared a very hard and unpromising position for a flower to be in. Talking about 'desert air' reminds one of the great central plain of California which for half the year is a 'scorched and dust swept desert,' yet in April it becomes one great flower bed four hundred miles long and thirty wide, lying at the feet of the snowy mountains. A traveller writes of it:—'Go where I would: east, west, north, south, I still flashed and rippled in flower gems. More than a hundred flowers touched my feet at every step closing above them as if I were wading in water.'

You wouldn't think that the Arctic region was a good place for flowers, and yet an explorer tells us he never saw such beautiful wild flowers as he did there during one brief summer.

Ruskin, with his love of mountains, claims the finest flowers to be those of the Alps, and we are informed that 'out of the Swiss glaciers, nestled by eternal snows, spring rocks whose bright tops are gardens of anemones and gentians.'

Jesus asks us to consider the 'lilies *of the field*'—not the garden or hot-house lilies which receive such conspicuous care and have every reason to be content—but the *wild* lilies which are often completely unheeded by mortal man, and yet continue to bloom their best.

For scholars of a scientific bent, the teacher might raise the question of the relation between wild and cultivated flowers; mentioning the various methods of "improving' the wild flower.

The debaters and moralisers in the class may perhaps doubt whether a wild flower *can* be improved by these artificial methods.

A wise teacher will then try to take the sting out of the word 'artificial' by pointing out that the so called artificial method is merely the natural method applied more regularly and systematically. After all, man is part of nature and what he does to a flower may in a sense be considered as belonging to the *natural* environment of the flower.

Part of the charm of the wild flower is due to the associations of a pleasant country walk or to the contrast it presents to the unlikely place in which it may be found, or to the suggestions of greater beauty under cultivation. But on the other hand the wild flower can always console itself with the thought that it supplies the material to be cultivated, and the result is due just as much to the nature of the wild material as to the cunning of the gardener.

The relation of content to 'divine discontent,' might also be talked about, as arising from this second message of the flower.

XVII.—Message of Individual Colour

It is Emerson who says in a chanting measure that 'all sorts of things and weather must be taken in together, to make up a year and a sphere,' or in sober prose:—You require infinite variety and individuality to get full orbed perfection and surely the flowers by their endless variety of tint and shape urge us, as human beings, to put forth in all sincerity and naturalness the colour of our own thoughts and feelings.

There is only one flower, that I know of that has been accused of slavish imitation, and that is the sunflower which Browning denounces for trying to be like the sun. All other flowers try to be like *themselves*, developing the seed within them each in its own special way. If it is true that no two leaves are exactly like, it will be all the more true that no two flowers are alike, even though they belong to the same species.

So the flowers ask each little boy to be a real boy and do things for himself as a real boy ought to. There must be no copying of some other boy's sums, no looking to some bigger boy to 'stick up' for you. You must learn to 'stick up' for yourself. The daisy doesn't look to the buttercup to know what sort of colour to bloom. If looks straight up into the face of the sun and gets its colour

from headquarters. Thus you see Browning was rather hard on the poor sunflower, since *every* flower gets its colour from the sun.

So all boys and girls should get their character-colour from the great Father of light and truth.

When anyone fails to grow up into himself it is a loss to the world; for just as it requires every variety of flower to express the full beauty of the world, so it requires every possible kind of personality to do the complete work of the world.

Still we must guard against being merely odd and queer. We should join in with others and be loyal to our side whether it is work or play. For being true to your colour means being true not only to yourself but to others. Before long we shall hear a great deal about colour in politics, and everybody, even Sunday school scholars ought to be taught to look abroad and see what party comes nearest to expressing what he thinks will be for the public good.

In the days of Solon that wise man, the Greek Solomon, who was dictator of Athens, 600 B.C., it was a punishable offence not to take sides in any civil strife. Solon was afraid that 'a body of timid and cautious neutrals would be fatal to public spirit and favour the growth of that apathy which makes tyrannies possible,' (Oman's History of Greece) so he tried to make every voter choose his party and exercise his vote.

XVIII.—Message of Fragrant Influence

Now the flower reveals its inner nature not only by its hue and shape but by the particular odour which it gives forth. In this respect it seems to be much more active than in merely blooming. It seems to be sending to us particles of itself, acting at a distance and giving us pleasant sensations even in the dark when we cannot see it.

Is not this a very tender, gentle message to those who, like the fragrant flowers, are shedding gracious influences in the dark places of the earth where there is no one to see or applaud ?

Everybody has a capacity for creating a certain atmosphere which is as strong and good as the character from which it comes.

At one time it was customary to refer to the saintly as having 'departed this life in the odour of sanctity.' But long before a man comes to his latter end may he create about him an atmosphere laden with sweet and fragrant odours, though for the most part he is unaware of the extensive and penetrating power of such influences, and it is perhaps well that this should be so, for the self-conscious exercise of power is not always so effective as the unconscious exercise of it.

We often find that this exalting influence is exerted by little children, who are blissfully unaware of the vast hold they have for good upon the lives of grown men and women.

Their influence is thus particularly like the aroma that comes from a flower, only richer and more significant.

Still more rich and deep is the influence that silently comes to us from the fully developed and highly individual character. Here we get into the region of magic and hypnotism.

This would be a very unworkable, unprogressive world if it were not for the beneficial influence of one person on another in that gentle, unobtrusive way which is so well illustrated by the fragrance of the flower, *e.g.*, how could there be any teaching or preaching if there were no power in what the hypnotist calls 'suggestion.' The people who really dominate the world are the men and women who make quiet little suggestions, throw out a hint here and a remark there, trusting for the rest to the sweetly compelling power of personality.

XIX.—Message of Active Growth

But the flowers have still more to teach us. We should make a mistake to think them as inactive as they look. They do something more even than bloom and shed their fragrance.

They have a twofold activity in common with all living, growing organisms, viz : turning away *from* what is harmful and turning *to* what is good.

This 'bifurcation' may be noticed in the very lowest organisms in which it takes the form of shrinking from anything nauseous, sharp or otherwise dangerous, and an almost conscious and purposeful turning to light, warmth and suitable food.

The law of the lower orders of life applies also to the higher, with the difference that its workings are directed by the exercise of intelligence and will.

Consider for example the sentiment contained in the children's hymn :—

> 'I . . . would . . .
> Shut my heart up like a flower
> At temptation's darksome hour ;
> Open it when shines the sun,
> And his love by fragrance own.'

This two-fold activity means growth, and unless we are constantly growing we cannot be healthy and happy, in fact we begin to decay and die.

Even in the case of those whom we call '*full* grown,' there is a continual growth going on to supply the parts which waste away and are generally shed.

Whereas in regard to their mental and spiritual nature, there is still *more* scope for growth and development.

Some years ago I happened to set forth to a certain professor of philosophy some view of the world with which he did not seem to agree. 'Ah' he said, 'I used to think that at one time'—and then after some reflection and a great sigh of relief he exclaimed:—'But, thank God, my mind's growing.'

The hesitation was caused probably by the fact that at first this conscientious thinker was a little uncertain whether his mind had really grown by a steady, logical progress from stage to stage, or whether it had changed in a more or less sudden and arbitrary manner.

We need to make a sharp distinction between growth and change. Growth means time, and often a certain amount of suffering ('growing pains.') Change may be quick and pleasant. Many young people are not content to grow steadily. They want a quick, easy change, like the little girl who wanted to be grown tall all at once, and so asked her mother for a pair of stilts, begging her not to mention it to father because 'men are so timid.'

Of course there is really no need to be in such a hurry to be grown up.

The time seems short enough to any boy who begins to think how long ago it was since he was dressed like a little girl: and when he now looks at his first pair of knickerbockers he says to himself:—'How I must have grown.'!

What we all need to learn is to cease wishing to drop into new circumstances, a better character, greater knowledge and the like, without having gone through the necessary stages of growth and discipline. This we have seen to consist mainly in avoiding what is harmful and seeking that which is nourishing and helpful.

XX.—Message of the Union of Earth and Heaven

The flower has told us how it grows. Perhaps we should now ask it where it grows *from*, or what it is really made of ? But if we were able to understand all the flower has to say to us in answer to these big questions we should be more than human. This is how Tennyson felt when he addressed the 'flower in the crannied wall':—

> 'But if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.'

What precisely is there to understand ? Well, the difficulty may be put in two ways, and it is essential that children should be made to feel such difficulties as they are the beginning of religious wonder.

How can a gaily coloured flower come out of the black earth ? If it comes down from the brightness of heaven how does it manage to get so firmly fixed in the dark earth ?

From such a way of putting the questions the answer may be suggested and possibly some clever child will get an inkling of the great truth that every living thing may be viewed in two ways (1) in regard to its physical constitution, or its connection with earth and (2) in regard to its æsthetic or spiritual value or its connection with heaven.

(1) The stem and leaf material of the flower are all akin to the ground out of which they have come in being touchable, smellable, and the like: but the colour of the flower must obviously have come from some other source. The sun's light contains all the various colours, and one or more of these heavenly colours must have been stamped upon the flower.

Thus the flower unites in its physical make-up the material both of earth and heaven.

(2) Then, in so far as the flower fills us with delight at its beauty and teaches us deep spiritual truths it belongs to a heaven of another sort. It must have

come from God. Yet in order to appeal to us in this way it has to be a touchable, smellable flower, *i.e.*, one firmly planted in the earth.

Here again we see how, in another way, the flower joins together earth and heaven. Cf. Wordsworth's skylark:—

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

The young scholar may be made to feel how near akin he is to the flower by being shown how he too unites earth and heaven.

(1) He is not of course rooted to the earth, but he is bound to stand on it or be supported by it in some way. His body is composed of hard material and of moisture just like the earth, and will eventually crumble up into earth dust. Meanwhile it has to be fed by what grows on the earth.

(2) But this is not the whole of the child. He has a mind that can go much faster than his legs, or rather can order the legs to go and do things for it, for the mind does not travel at all in the strict sense, because you can't see it or smell it, or trace it by itself in any physical way. The same can be said of his purposes and affections. They are all very real and yet they are strictly spiritual and heavenly things.

But of course you never come across them by themselves, but always as expressed in some bodily, earthly way. This then is how the *child*, as well as the flower, unites earth and heaven.

The practical side of the message of the flower is that however earthridden may be our human lot, we can nearly always bring down into it some heavenly colour and some divine fire.

XXI.—Message of Promise of Fruit

There is one other word that the flowers have to say to us before we go away and it is this:—

You must not consider only my bloom, which is very fine, I know, but you must reflect on the meaning of this little seed that lies at the heart of me. My leaves make a brave show, I admit, and I am proud to think they give real delight to the sons of earth. But my leaves have something more to do than that. They have to guard the baby fruit which you may see within me.

Now if you would be like me, my little human friend, you will not be content to make a fine display of colour (strong personality), or to shed a fragrant odour (gracious manners), or even to grow into a fine specimen of your kind. You will want to fulfil your promise—your promise of fruit, so that when your bloom is shed your fruit may remain. You see, people who are hungry want something more than flowers. So people who are hungry for real help and love cannot be satisfied merely with a blooming face and pleasant manners.

Let the flower of your young life, then, be as the blossom of the fruit trees, rich in promise of those fruits that shall be for the healing of the nations. May this promise be richly fulfilled.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Quo Vaditis contains a new version of the parable of the Good Samaritan:—

'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and likewise a Levite; which, when they were at the place, came, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw how the wayfarers on the Jericho road were falling among thieves in this manner daily, and were being stripped, he had compassion on them. And, as he pondered the brigandage that was in the land, he was moved with indignation. And, being exceeding wroth, he went forth, and gathered unto him a band of righteous men, which harried all the mountain side. And they came upon the thieves in their den among the rocks and took them, every man. And haled them before the judge, and the judge delivered them to the officer, and they were cast into prison. The brigands, when they were clapped into jail, perceived now that that land was for them that are righteous, and that to toil were profitable above thieving and booty. Moreover, the jailer dealt in love with the prisoners, and was skilful to frame their minds unto better things. So that when their imprisonment was at an end, they went forth, to live no longer now on the earnings of others. Thus the land was delivered with a great deliverance, and wayfarers thenceforth went down from Jerusalem to Jericho in safety, with none to destroy or make afraid. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?'

A SCHOOL IN UTOPIA

KENNETH BOND

It was on a Monday afternoon that I spent a Sunday in Utopia. How it came about I can only dimly guess. After reading through the current number of the QUARTERLY, I fell a-musing on the papers on Sunday school work, that I had listened to at Conferences and Associations in by-gone years; such musty and magnificent papers, guaranteed to send an audience to sleep during an earthquake. I recalled Jones; Yes, surely it was Jones, reading his famous account of the Ideal Sunday School, with passing sketches of the Ideal Superintendent, the Ideal Scholar (whose name was not Cephas, if I remember rightly), the Ideal Class Room; finishing up with the Perils of the Higher Criticism, and the Leakage among our Senior Pupils, with 'some clinching statistics.' The memory of that terrible paper, and the terrific effort to regard Jones in the light of a Christian must have overcome me. The hum of the passing electric cars ceased and I heard the call of bells to some early service. Blessed relief! I was in Utopia on a Sunday morning. My first feeling was one of thankfulness that the bells were not too near. Then, somehow, it was borne in upon me that in Utopia the church bells are so cunningly devised as to sound sweet and lulling to the ringers in the belfry. Again I seemed to hear Jones recommencing on the Necessity for Graded Schools, and started, half expecting to find my head in sharp contact with the back of the pew. But it was an error. I was indeed in Utopia, and could spend an hour in a Utopian Sunday school. I knew, of course, that there was sure to be a good morning school, but it seemed unnatural to don my clothes so early on the Day of Rest. So I lay abed till called to dress for breakfast. The meal being over—we partook of ripe fruits, nuts, and cake, washed down with cold spring water—it was time very soon to set forth for the church. My host and his wife were preceded by some seven or eight children, who appeared genuinely happy at the idea of going to worship. The building in which we assembled was simple, yet with a quiet stateliness, and nearly filled before the service commenced. I observed that full one half of those present were children, sitting soberly among their elders, their clear, high voices mingling very sweetly in the hymns of praise and in the responses. The minister, in due course, addressed them, as indeed he could scarcely forbear, there being so many present. He spoke with a great cheerfulness and brevity. I can only liken his address to a picture, and the moral or lesson of it to a fine frame of gold, too narrow to catch the eye, yet holding all together. The sermon to the elders was not over long, so that there fell no need of clattering the children out of church, and the older ones among them might even adventure to understand its meaning, and the younger to be arrested by its parables. When all was finished and the benediction given, parents and children went homewards with cheerful conversation and merry hearts. Our dinner I need not describe, except to say there were no baked meats. But when it was over we all smoked in a way they have in Utopia. The fragrant leaf was smouldered in a kind of censer so that all might inhale the odour in a seemly and clean fashion. However, not being used to it, I felt a something new and wanting in this method. But to continue. When the time came the children carried me with them to the Sunday school; and this was my great opportunity. For I had heard so many fabulous tales of their doings in Utopia as to think that seeing only was believing, and now I was to see with my own eyes.

First as to the building. It adjoined the church, being almost as large, though its size included many rooms on either side of a central hall. At the further end of the hall there was an organ with gilded pipes, and on the walls large simple pictures done by the elder children, under the guidance of a master. Besides, there were some fine specimens of topiary in the gardens outside, and windows full of flowers within. The roof was pitched high and the windows made to admit much light and air. The words 'Silence is Praise' were written over the door where the children entered. I observed as great order and reverence as in the church, there being no conversation or other noise. The singing was very sweet, all holding books and praising with uplifted faces. The leader of the school was a

learned man of cheerful aspect, having lines of firmness about his mouth, with gentle eyes and longish dark hair. I thought the children looked upon him lovingly. One curious thing I noticed, it was that the women teachers were not only soberly attired, but had removed their head-gear. This, I was told, was so that the girls should have no distraction on that score, as is their propensity. The president having conducted the devotions, announced the subjects for that day's consideration, and also the subjects for the coming Sunday. The children then dispersed to their various rooms, and I was left with the president to pursue my enquiries. He told me that while he did this work for love, he was also paid for it as a kind of children's minister, and instructor of the teachers. I asked if the teachers also were paid. But it seems that while they give their services freely, so greatly is their office honoured, that privileges are granted to them, and they are elected to and ordained for this work with solemn formality. The president instructed them both in regard to the nature of childhood, the manner of teaching, and the subjects requisite to be taught. I gathered that the lessons extended over ten years, so that at sixteen the youths were well versed in religious matters. Also the teachers kept very close to the hearts of their pupils, visiting them in sickness and joining heartily in their festivals.

'Surely,' I said, 'all this is not only very costly, but difficult in its call upon skilful teachers.' But the president replied that in Utopia children were everything; the whole joy of life was to sustain a race of noble beings, for whose spiritual advancement nothing was too expensive; and to this end the homes in Utopia were formed after a far more simple pattern than the schools, wherein the children learn the wisdom of the ages for the building up of their whole life. Where this view of children ruled all the rest followed. Further, the children were ever encouraged to ask questions, so that their knowledge might rest on a foundation of intelligence; and they were also made to see the doings of Providence in the manifold beauty and orderliness of nature.

While we were further conversing the hour chimed for the return of the whole school to the central hall for dismissal. Judge then of my frame of mind when the president calling me again to his side, said I was a visitor from the Land of Imperfection, and that he would call on me to tell them some of the things which are done among the Imperfectionists in their Sunday schools. At this I was terribly confused and remembered a boy named Cephas, and my tongue refused to utter one word. My confusion was so utter that with a start I felt myself sinking into the earth.

* * *

It was Monday afternoon again. I had slipped from my easy chair, and the thump with which I descended on the hearth-rug terminated my visit to Utopia. Opposite me, with eyes staring and in a startled attitude was my terrier, 'Doodle.' He looked as who should say 'Gracious! what is the matter.' I grinned rather sheepishly at him for a moment, shook myself broad awake and took my bearings. Yes, it was Monday, and I could not do better than run down the street and drag my nearest ministerial neighbour out for a walk and a discussion on 'The Sunday School of the Future.' Anderson, happily, was in. He is a keen Sunday school man and under much discouragement has pulled his school together in the most wonderful manner. I found him in his study into which the servant ushered me with quite needless formality.

'Hullo, Gregory, glad to see you, old man. Sit down and have a smoke. Lend me your pouch when you've done with it. Mine's feeling 'Mondayish' How are things going?'

He filled his pipe from my pouch and without turning his head ran his hand along the wall by the side of his basket chair. It came in contact presently with two feet of string depending from a nail. At the other end was a match-box. This device he dubbed his 'matchless patent,' because as everyone in the house knew where he was sure to find a box of matches it was generally empty.

'Oh, as usual,' I replied. 'Nothing exciting. But I've been thinking over Sunday school affairs a good deal lately. Seems to me we have got to alter our methods. We are behind the times.'

'For that matter,' he answered, 'the

church universal is behind the times; and the children must not run in advance of the mother. The church was designed to be the world's furnace; she has left that part of the engine severely alone and accepted the humble office of the governor. So that at least we are safe from any peril of running madly into destruction. However, 'that's another story.' What Utopian idea have you got hold of ?'

The word 'Utopian' flustered me a bit, but I steadied myself by looking out of the window before I replied, 'We have no system. The organisation of the Council schools shows us up horribly. We must have better schools, better teachers, better methods.'

Before he answered, Anderson begged the loan of a match, after a fresh appeal to 'the matchless patent.' After half-a-dozen grunting puffs, for he is a heavy man, the oracle delivered itself with great firmness and gravity.

'Listen, my dear man. I am going to speak the common 'horse' sense which is more detestable to dreamers than sand on their bread. I have just read two proposals that will serve as a text. A man suggests that we should pay our Sunday school superintendent; a woman, that we should unite our schools in the villages in order to grade them. Rogers, the other day, came across the first of these suggestions and said we ought to think about it. I say we ought not to think about it; not because it is undesirable or wrong, but simply because it's idiotic. Our church is among the strongest; there is not an organisation in the denomination that is not dunning us for more money. The chapel keeper wants a rise. It is proposed to pay the choirmaster. Someone wants the organist to resign in favour of a paid man. Yet we can hardly meet current expenses. I have been at work here sixteen years. Began on a hundred and get a hundred and forty. Every year I am asked to join a new and imperatively necessary society with an annual subscription of anything from two and six to half-a-guinea. The suggestion is simply out of court except in our wealthiest churches. In them the superintendent is generally a man of means but *his* resignation in favour of a paid, trained man, would spell 'ructions.' We are not living in Utopia, we are living as the Americans say, 'right here'; and 'right here' is where the dollars don't run to paid superintendents. The same brutal fact settles a lot of suggestions, from pictures to class-rooms and school halls of 'the latest design.' The other suggestion is equally fantastic. It ignores human nature. It is a suggestion that could only be adopted among the Utopians, where there would be no call for it. Village churches with united Sunday schools may be possible. By the time we can establish them the need for them will have gone by.'

'Well, what about trained teachers?' I queried.

'If you mean by trained teachers, professionally trained, there you are in Utopia again. Whitefield's may advertise for a woman of means whom they are prepared to send to a training college, but then, Whitefield's is not London Lane. Besides there is the difficulty even with the best intentions of getting any teachers at all. Personally, I am thankful for any one who will offer their Sunday afternoons regularly. We are three teachers short now and it seems impossible to get volunteers. The one thing is for our head-quarters to provide a regular, ample and cheap series of lessons, full of information and with hints on teaching. But they must be full. It is all very well to talk of teachers preparing the lessons as if one were advising students: two of my men are colliers, five of the girls work in factories. They have Bibles and a few story books. I rejoice in their willingness to help and would not discourage them for worlds. But they are not students and their work and habits and duties make the getting up of a lesson in a scientific way an impossibility; yet they are expected to keep their classes interested for half-an-hour in a crowded room, a stuffy atmosphere and with a minimum of silence. It's absurd. It's only an exceptional volunteer that could do it satisfactorily, as one can see by the amount of attention paid by the children. But then—it's time to be out. There's time to go round the golf course before dusk.'

He tapped the bowl of his pipe on the palm of his hand and consigned the ashes to the fender. A few minutes later the musical 'thwack' of the driver sent the ball and my dream of Utopia flying.

WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

E. K. H.

Sunday school work in South Africa has its joys and encouragements, its failures and disappointments, just as in every land. Children are pretty much the same no doubt all the world over; but surroundings in a new country are so strange and fresh that it would be odd indeed if the methods of older lands were exactly suitable to work here.

There is much labour and devotion of an unquestionably noble type shown by members of the Roman Catholic Clergy and by the Sisters, in the work among children. I frankly admit that I feel this to be a very serious matter for the State, and not only for the Church; and it is somewhat surprising that the strongly Protestant Dutch Reformed Church is apparently a passive onlooker while this very strong and extensive Roman propaganda is making rapid headway. While the devotion of the clergy is in every way admirable from their point of view, it is full of menace for the future of the State. But the success of this great effort is only achieved by the consent or even active co-operation of Protestant Parents, for large numbers of fathers and mothers, themselves strictly brought up in an evangelical church, are so occupied with other affairs that they are only too ready to have their children cared for and (as it is expected) fairly well educated in secular subjects, without concerning themselves with the religious aspect of the question.

On the other hand, the average South African youngster is a very independent being. Generally speaking he has been brought up by a Kaffir or Hottentot nurse, there is but little, if any, of the homely fireside influence of the old country in his life. He is an out-of-doors animal, more at home with the coloured than with the white man. Thus the carelessness of the parents meets the independence of the child half-way, and these factors make Sunday school work far from easy or specially successful.

Work among the elder lads and girls I find very often taken by the pastor of a church—few laymen and (strange to say) fewer "laywomen" seem able to do this, or to have inclination if they had the needful gifts. Yet I must remark that there are some noble exceptions to this rule. One would that they were not striking from their rarity, for here devoted laymen have a grand opportunity of doing good work for the State.

In several schools I know the American Star Chart System has been adopted with marked success. As to the teaching, it is of course on plain evangelical lines, very often the International Sunday School Lessons are used, and in some districts examinations are taken up eagerly, and good work is done by the scholars.

The difficulty of retaining the interest of young people, constantly crops up and Guilds, Christian Endeavour Societies and the like are found of great use in many cases.

But it seems as if a new start of some kind were needed; could we but rekindle the enthusiasm many of the fathers and mothers here had in early days at home on behalf of the religious training of their children, we should find the chief difficulties solved.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

W. R. WOODHEAD

Once again the bells are telling
Of our gentle Saviour's birth;
Over hill and valley swelling,
Peace proclaiming to the earth;
And the angels' song and story
Come to cheer our hearts again.
Unto God the Highest, glory,
Peace on earth, goodwill to men!

Years have passed and still that story
Fills the heart with peace and love;
Children young and old men hoary,
Feel his blessing from above.
Still his gentle voice is calling
To the weary and oppressed,
To the poor, the fainting, falling,
'Come, and I will give you rest.'

May this Christmas bring us gladness,
Joys unnumbered ours this day;
Banish all our care and sadness,
Let all hearts be glad and gay;
Though the days be cold and dreary,
And the nights be dark and long;
We can make our way less weary,
With a cheerful Christmas song.

One great characteristic of holiness is never to be exacting—never to complain.—*Gold Dust.*

SNOWY SCHOOL BATTLES AND TEAS

ALEXANDER WEBSTER

On Candlemas Eve, the boys were afraid they would lose their walk and tea. For weeks the snow had lain deeply all round. The snow-plough was out several times to clear the road for the mail coach, and on the roadsides the snow lay in high, hard piles.

But in the afternoon, when the boys got out of school they saw signs of another snowfall. There was a smir over the hills and it was evident the clouds were proposing a storm. A few heavy flakes came slanting down to announce the coming of the fleecy hosts.

As the boys stood sadly watching the onset, the schoolmaster came out; and, after looking shrewdly around, said 'We're in for a heavy night of it laddies, but we'll hope for a clear morning. Go home and get ready.'

They caught the dominie's hope and scampered off, but before they got far the flakes were whirling thickly around them. Geordie Gordon ('Tuskie') had a full mile to go on an upland road; Willie Marr ('Ramie') and Peter Morrison ('Tansie') had near three miles before them, over the commonty and down by the back moss, but they started out shouting 'Hurrah for Candlemas! It'll be fine the morn!'

Sandy Littlejohn was not so sure about it and ran home to ask his grannie's opinion. She was his authority on all doubtful questions. 'Dinna be fleyt laddie,' said she, 'ye'll get yer walk and yer tea baith. Its only the skailin' o' a sma' clood.' And grannie was right.

They were hardy boys, accustomed to such winters. That year they had a high time with snow battles, snow-houses, and snow-images. But they wanted an extra jolly day on Candlemas. It was always a holiday and they wanted it fair and sunny.

The village had two schools, both church property. The oldest was owned by the Established Church: the other by Dissenters. There was always feud between them. The most of the boys at the auld school ('moderates,' they were called) were country lads—sons of farmers and cottars. The boys of the other school were mainly residents in the village. The country lads were heavier and stronger than the village boys, and usually were victors in fights. Their school stood high, and, when a fight was on, they sallied forth with a rush which overpowered the lower lying school.

But, this year, the dissenting boys ('nons' they were called) won the snow battle which lasted for three days. It was a desperate fight and was centred in the square which lay between the schools. Both schools prepared for it pluckily, the 'Nons' with much drill by 'Tuskie,' the leader. When there was enough snow, the word was out for a fight on the third day. Great ramparts of snow were built around the schools, and immense piles of snow balls were made. The leaders on both sides picked and set their fighters and arranged plan of battle. The schools were empty; there were no lessons; nothing but the fight was in mind. How long it would last no one knew, but all were determined to fight bravely.

The masters stood aloof; all they said was 'Now, laddies, no stones; it must be a fair snow fight. No mean tricks. Win honourably.' The onset was made as usual by the boys of the auld school. They rushed down with bonnets and wallets full of snow balls and attacked the formidable snow garrison of the other school. They were smartly repulsed and driven back across the square. They were surprised and dispirited for they had never been beaten that way before. They called for a truce, and the fight was off for the day.

Next morning, the 'Nons' came by secret understanding one by one and hid near the enemy's fortress, and after the others had assembled, but before they were arrayed, rushed forth at a signal and made a fierce attack. For a moment there was a panic among the surprised boys, but their leader rallied them and they made a good defence. But the 'Nons' being once inside the ramparts, and in possession of the piled ammunition, kept their place heroically. All day the battle raged in the playground, the force attacked being unable to break through or beat back their assailants. Into the school the Moderates were driven. Then they cried 'A Parley!' The leaders conferred. They were spectacles, hardly discernible for the snow upon faces and clothes. They agreed to

a truce till ten o'clock next day.' The 'Nons' retired with the air of victors. They had never done so much before. They had entirely demolished the ramparts and trampled the playground till it was useless for a fight; and they had practically made their enemies prisoners. It was a marvellous victory! On the third day the victors occupied their own garrison, fortified it, and provided abundant ammunition. Their scouts reported that the enemy, with great difficulty were rebuilding their fortress, and seemed disposed to remain in it. The leader of the 'Nons' determined on a fight to draw them out. He sent a band of his fleetest warriors up to make an attack, appear to yield and then fly. He, with some of his hardiest, would wait for and rally them at the opening of the square. The ruse succeeded. The whole force was drawn out hotly and in disarray. Their rush was arrested, but it was too strong, even in disorder, to be thrown back. Retreating on the square, and sending for the rest of his forces, the 'Nons' leader massed his men. They looked so determined that the others lost heart. But the issue was to be fought out there. For three hours the battle raged. The shops were closed, and at the house windows the people watched the fight. Many valiant things were done with the snow. The ball makers were diligent, and the throwers were careful of their aim.

The leaders were the main marks. The fighters were all battered with snow, and their cheeks tingled with the blows of the balls that stung as they struck. They were all in the passion of the fight. Answering to a heroic advance of their leader, the 'Nons' made a gallant rush, and the enemy yielded. Up the hill they ran, chased by the shouting victors who pursued them to their mocking garrison. Into the school they were forced as before amid cries of 'Beaten.' Their leader cried 'Truce,' and then said, 'We admit defeat. The victory this year is yours.' The 'Nons' were in high spirits. With much rejoicing, they carried their leader 'Tuskie' shoulder high around the square.

On Candlemas Day there was friendship and unity between the schools. They had a walk together. The boys dressed themselves fancifully. They borrowed military and other garments, swords, pistols, guns, and with the village band at their head, marched to the house of the laird or some big farmer, firing, shouting and singing all the way.

In the evening each school had its soirée. The 'Nons' party was held in the church. The tea was made in the schoolroom and carried into church in shining brass kettles.

The morning of this particular Candlemas day was fair, as Sandy Littlejohn's grannie had prophesied, and the boys were up early, glad of the bright day. The snow was deep, but the snowplough, with a great array of decorated horses, had cleared a pathway for the coach and the procession.

After the excitement and exertion of the walk, the boys were tired, but they rallied heartily for the tea which was the greatest treat of the winter. The joy of it was unspeakable. When the tea was done, there was a talk to the 'littleanes' by the minister. He was a tall, white haired man, with a bright, gracious presence. He knew each child by name, and there was nothing more esteemed by the bairns in their shy way than a word from him as he passed. When he stopped and gave a kindly touch on head or shoulder there was blushing rapture in the face. It was an inspiration for learning and obedience.

When his impressive tea-talk was done, three boys in turn said hymns. (It was the boys' day and the girls had to be silent). The first sayer was Sandy Littlejohn. He was only eight, but was tall and a good scholar. He stood up on the front seat, and repeated his hymn, in a clear voice, without a mistake. The first verse of it was :—

> 'See another year has gone!
> Quickly have the seasons passed,
> This we enter now upon
> Will to many prove their last.'

There was no applause allowed in the church, but it was easily seen by the radiant faces that all were pleased with the good saying.

The other boys forgot some of their words, and Sandy, who had learnt their hymns as well as his own, prompted them. Sandy was the hero of the evening, and his aunt who kept an Infant School was proud of him. His grannie kissed him lovingly when they got home, and said:—'Ye maun aye min' your hymn,

an' hae the guid o't in ye.' He is now nearly as old as his grannie was then, and has not forgotten his hymn. It comes up into his mind often, and brings with it pathetic memories of his childhood. He, like the rest of the boys, was seriously taught in the day school and in the Sabbath school. The honest and wise dominie had a rare way of giving Bible lessons to the elder boys. This is something like it, 'I maun tell ye the first o' the Bible stories are poems. The things didna actually happen: they were *thought*. It widna spoil the tales if ye took them a' as poetry. They're gran' fancies. Genesis is a great poem. That Eden story is splendid, as good as anything in Homer. Ye ken fine that the garden, the trees and the serpent are poetic figures. They refer to things in the human heart. It's an allegory of trial, a drama—tragic enough, I wot, of temptation and suffering. Beware, my lads, o' the serpent in your ain desire.'

They did not fully understand him, but they loved him and were educated in spirit by him. He encouraged them to ask questions. Sometimes they dared to speir great things. Once a trembling boy asked 'What is the Devil?' The answer was:—'Ony thoct or thing that's ill.' The same questioner asked 'Where is Hell?' 'In the bad heart, my laddie, dinna ye fear any other.'

The good dominie was suspected of being unsound in the faith and was kept out of the ministry. But his boys believed in him.

The Sabbath (it was never called 'Sunday' in that village) was very strictly kept. No one went out of doors except to the kirk, or on necessary works of mercy, and to look out of a window, not to speak of whistling or laughing, was regarded as a sin.

The youngest had to be quiet and to read if they could. At five, then, a boy could read the Bible and say Psalms. Sandy, before he was eight, got a prize from the minister's wife for saying a great piece of the 119th Psalm. He was very proud of the sixpence he got.

Now, when he looks back, he sees how good it was to train the mind, not merely to remember, but to consider what it learnt. Much that he got in his early years as religious instruction is Error in his eyes now, and he feels strongly the duty of storing the child mind with such ideas as are never likely to prove untrue to mature thought. The hymns of his childhood were all didactic and dogmatic, and expressed ideas of God which made Him severe, and produced an unhealthy fear. Some of these trouble Sandy still, and make him shake his white head in regret that such were ever taught. But there were benefits in the rigorous teaching. It gave strength to the mind and produced an atmosphere of piety in the heart.

Even the quiet, restrained soirée in the hill village before railways came, had its spiritual good. It was a bare, dull, severe event compared with the modern children's tea party, but the children loved it in their small and primitive way. They had an extra fine 'piece,' and, what was unusual with children, a cup of tea. That was a wonderful treat, which made Candlemas the greatest holiday. They had to take their pleasure quietly. In church they dare not speak or laugh, and the restriction was a lesson in self-control. With the silence came reflection. There was no instrumental music in church. The precentor led the singing, which was slow and very much in a minor key. In the Sabbath school, the praise was by voice alone, and it was the Psalms that were sung. Hymns were for soirées only.

Sandy was so well up in the Bible as a boy that he could tell where any word mentioned was to be found. Before he was sixteen, by diligent searching, he gained the prize, in a competition open to children throughout the world, for the best answers to a set of Bible questions. The casket of books is one of his most highly revered possessions. When he goes back to his native village, and looks at the little house in which he learnt to read the Bible, with his grannie prompting him; at the bigger school to which he went, while he was wearing a frock and a slip over his wincey trousers; and at the square where the big snow fight was, he wonders at the life he has lived since, with so much of the influence of his early training in it. He has travelled since then in Europe and America, and taught and preached in many places, but there is no spot on earth so dear or so fair as his birthplace.

He has had with him all these years a relic of the great snow fight in which the 'Nons' won. He was among them, and

in one of the sallies of the 'Moderates' he and others were driven into the little schoolhouse, the door of which was hastily shut, with the little finger of his left hand tight between the hinges. His broken 'crannie' reminds him of the white battle in which his was the worst wound. He does not remember swooning and being carried to the druggists to have his finger (badly) set, but he has memory of coming to consciousness and being told that the accident had suspended the battle. There were drops of blood in the snow, and these frightened the boys. In the compassion of fear the fighting stopped. The hardihood ingrained into him by wintry experiences and rigorous tasks has helped him in many an intellectual battle, and enabled him to endure persecution 'because of the word.' He cannot doubt that the influence of the Sunday School goes deep into the soul of the scholar and forms a good foundation for character, and lasts throughout life as an inspiration of thought and conduct.

HAYFIELD SUMMER SCHOOL

Leaves from a Diary

ELIZABETH WILSON

In transcribing the following notes I wish to assist those who have not visited a Summer School to form a correct idea of its value, to create an appetite for the wholesome fare they provide, and to show the advantage of teachers meeting and working together for one great object. The social intercourse and conferences on our individual experiences at home, and the soul-stirring addresses and lectures from distinguished teachers, made us feel the importance and grandeur of our work, and a strong desire to become better fitted to carry it on. At the opening, our president invited the children of larger growth, to come and enjoy their lessons, with the confidence that there would be no examination. To say that we enjoyed them is but a mild expression, we fully appreciated them, and made frequent use of our notebooks for future reference. The following gleanings from mine may shew what a high tone was manifested from beginning to end.

The keynote of the whole session was sounded by Principal Gordon on Sunday morning in the subject for his discourse, 'Children crying in the temple.' It is the cry of the children which impels us to see, or try to see, where we need strengthening, and what are the wisest methods of applying our understanding to their needs. The true aim of Sunday school teaching is not so much the idea of imparting knowledge, as the idea of imparting a *thirst* for knowledge. In the evening Mr. Gordon shewed how Calvin, Darwin, and Servetus used their natural abilities for the good of others. 'We need young lives to develop our own. If we would accomplish anything worthy, there must be self-dedication to a high ideal.'

Rev. J. J. Wright, in his lecture on Child Study, said:—'In all work delimitation is necessary. Teaching is an art based upon science, but the two momentous, life-upholding things are ideas and inspiration. The way to bring up a young life is not so much to be trainers or teachers, as helpers of the better life, shewing each one how to be and do its best. How? By the power of personal character! Whether there be much learning, or little, without a loving personality Sunday school teaching is of very little use.

Dr. W. Griffiths shewed how the New Testament centred round the personality of Jesus. 'Vitality in any person shews itself in action and mental qualities. We can make our own movement in a similar way, by the methods we adopt in doing our work—not by slovenly, hap-hazard preparation, but by definiteness in teaching and by example in the moral walks of life.'

We learned how to read our New Testament more intelligently by the able and homely instruction imparted by Rev. J. H. Weatherall. 'We Unitarians ought to be in the forefront of New Testament teachers, as we do not accept its infallibility. The Canon of the New Testament is a list of sacred writings, written by a mixed set of people, probably slaves, who had their full share of human weaknesses and imperfections. These were the cases which held the jewels.'

Another form of teaching was introduced by Mr. W. W. Midgley, on the Religious Spirit in Natural History. 'The power of God is seen in the solar system—space; in geology—time; there is evidence of the creative power in plant and animal life. Botany and zoology take a wide and com-

prehensive view of nature. There is evidence of divine wisdom in the interdependence of all natural objects and their co-operation with each other. In a double degree is animal life dependent on plants—for breath and food.'

A scholarly paper was read by Rev. H. McLachlan, on—General History as a subject for Sunday school teaching—'The course of history has been directed more by principles of great men than anything else, and it is ours to teach how ideal construction is based on reality. One of a number, who makes history teaches brotherhood, fraternal friendship, and does away with a narrow outlook upon life. Self-interest is not the principle of freedom and religion. We see how great thoughts and great deeds make the growth of social and political progress in our Houses of Parliament. There is a tendency in historical teaching to pass into the region of biography; teach the power of personality, unity, and order, perception and receptivity, truth the sovereign good of human nature. A simple teaching of history in the hands of a sincere religious teacher may be a boon to scholars. Knowledge vitalises the religious life, and sympathy can make the virtues and failures of men—like dry bones—to live.'

A line of thought seldom brought forward, but one of great importance, was introduced by Mrs. Crompton, on Purity—how to teach the scholars so to train their bodies that they may be fit temples for the Spirit of God to dwell in. 'To think good thoughts and follow the teaching of 1st Genesis, obeying the command of God that our lives may produce better men and women than we are. The gift of life is a great and good gift when used according to the laws of nature. Rightly understood, to be endowed with the power to live, means that every function shall be used for its own right purpose under its own law: therefore to misuse any power must be to frustrate that law.'

Temperance in all things was another link connected by Mr. W. R. Marshall. 'There should be care in eating and drinking clean, wholesome food and drink. As helpers of the young, brethren of mankind, children of God, there is a grave responsibility laid on us.' Do we not long to see our boys and girls grow up into strong, true-hearted men and women? Then let us fortify them with every influence that strengthens character, and all that can make life more simple and less costly; all that can elevate their requirements of character in those they marry; in all that can purify and make the law more strict and effective against those who would make gain of vice.

Mr. Wigley, who has had a long and wide experience, gave an instructive and helpful paper on the Sunday School Outlook.

A lecture by the Rev. S. H. Mellone, on 'The Laws of Life and Teaching Scholars to Think,' shewed in a practical manner, how, if we are to mould the lives and characters of our scholars, we must first teach the importance of thought. 'Thoughts are things. Begin with the avenue of thought and ideas which arouse feelings and actions; come down to their level of thought and understand their position. Starting from that point, guide them into a realm they have not come into contact with, and link on to their lives better things. The Bible is the best textbook we have as a means of moral instruction. Difficulties lie in its human element; it is not a sealed book, but one of illumination; perhaps the reason for this lies in the blending of excellence and failing in all Jewish heroes. If we present these traits of character, let the scholars decide which appeals most, but present them so as to deal with their strength and weakness as means to an end. There is the idea of living for the whole in the Old Testament teaching of the prophets, from the savage to the highest ideal.

The closing lesson by Rev. J. E. Manning proved most fitting as it dealt with loyalty to truth, and was in deed and truth 'a lesson from Italy.'

The foregoing are but a few of the thoughts, but I trust they will be sufficient to prove the worth of these Summer Schools.

Oxford, with all its historical and scholastic associations may offer far more at the next session to those students who aspire to higher branches of knowledge. Those who desire more wisdom and understanding in order to be more efficient in their work amongst young people, whether as primary or senior class teachers, will be sure to find strength and help in the Summer School.

THE ART OF TEACHING

The London Sunday School Society is to be warmly congratulated upon its enterprise in undertaking the arrangements for a course of lectures upon the 'Art of Teaching,' by Mr. T. Raymont, M.A., at Essex Hall on six consecutive Wednesday evenings. Mr. Raymont is vice-principal of the Training Department, Goldsmith's College, University of London. As an experienced teacher of teachers, he made no attempt to deal at all exhaustively with his subject, but chose rather to illustrate a few basal principles, and attempt to stimulate his hearers to further study. The lectures were fairly well attended, and closely followed by our teachers and the members of the Moral Instruction League which had, in an excellent spirit of fellowship, closely associated itself with the undertaking; but one could only regret that so many of the younger and less experienced of the teachers in our schools failed to take this excellent opportunity of making themselves more efficient for the important work which they are doing.

Reminding his hearers that in all teaching there must be two objects for the verb—a person and a thing—the lecturer advocated at least as careful a study of the child as of the subject matter; and, without entering fully into the psychology of the child, he drew attention to three salient characteristic tendencies of the child-mind. Instead of complaining of our scholars' restlessness, inattention, inquisitiveness and susceptibility to bad example, as though these were to be regarded as some pernicious instincts which had first of all to be eradicated before teaching could begin, the lecturer urged that they were only the expression of misdirected, and often merely undirected, energy, and sprang from certain innate and perfectly normal tendencies. To deprive a child of its instincts for energising, for inquiry, and for imitation would be to render it incapable of learning; and all true teaching consists in the wise direction and the judicious satisfaction of these instincts. A recognition of these facts should suggest a clue to the problem how to gain the scholars' attention. The child's power of forcing itself to attend to the teacher against its inclination being small, and the subject offering small scope for the employment of strong stimuli which attract an involuntary attention, we are left with the need to make use of that spontaneous attention which is given in response to an appeal to the instinct of inquiry. To be successful here the matter which we are to present must belong to the region which lies between that which is so familiar as to be commonplace and without interest on the one hand, and that which is so completely unfamiliar as to be incomprehensible in any of its phases. Hence the teacher, having first clearly determined in his own mind what is the aim of the lesson (*e.g.* what moral truth does he wish to inculcate?), will, after a few introductory remarks which serve to prepare the minds of the scholars and perhaps link the new lesson up with the previous one, proceed at once to appeal directly to the spontaneous attention of his scholars by 'presenting' a story, true or imaginative, or some other form of illustration. This should be done with sufficient detail to make the illustration as vivid and real as possible and the next step is to 'formulate' or state again very clearly those salient points in the illustration which are mainly to be used when he makes the actual 'application' to which all that precedes is intended to lead by natural and logical steps.

Method of presentation is of first-rate importance and the art of presentation is mainly the art of illustration, the latter finding its resources in exposition, questioning, and narration. After brief reference to the exhibition of illustrations in the form of actual objects which in themselves may be the illustration, such as flowers, pictures, maps, black-board drawings and models, which are, in suitable conditions, as useful as they are constantly found to be in the day-school, the lecturer passed to the verbal illustration which in the inculcation of moral and religious lessons must generally be relied upon almost exclusively. Here a word of warning was inserted to the effect that the teacher must always be alive to the danger of using as an illustration some idea which was even less familiar to his pupils than the religious or moral idea which it was intended to illustrate! He must train himself to know what ideas will be associated

in the minds of children with the words and images of which he is making use, and this is especially true of those comparisons (similes) which are intended to illustrate certain relations between objects. In the parable of the Good Shepherd, for instance, not only does the child need a true presentation of an oriental shepherd, but the main lesson depends upon his appreciation of the likeness which there is in the relations said to subsist between such a shepherd and his sheep on the one hand, and between Jesus and his followers on the other.

The art of narration, which in the born teacher is nothing less than a gift, is one which is nevertheless to a large extent capable of being acquired and cultivated; and, seeing that the apt story must always be the main resource of the Sunday school teacher, he is strongly advised to study the best models and by practice acquire the art of telling a story well, without the aid of books and without forgetting points which are essential.

To ask questions well is an exceedingly valuable but probably more difficult accomplishment. They must be such that the answer is not quite obvious, and, as a rule, such as are not quite beyond the knowledge of the pupil; they must not be put in such a form that they can be correctly answered by 'yes' or 'no,' for in that case mere guessing cannot always be detected. The most useful question is one which demands not merely memory but thought before it can be answered, and is directed rather to assist the pupil to prove that such knowledge as he is already possessed and aware of will enable him to make a further step into the region of the unknown.

Mr. Raymont's list of useful books on modern educational lines will be welcomed by our teachers. Here it is: *Primer of Teaching*—Adams (J. Clarke, 6d.); *Lectures on Teaching*—Fitch (Cambridge Press, 5/-); *Stimulus*—A. Sidgwick (Cambridge Press); *Making of Character*—MacCunn (Cambridge Press, about 3/-); *Principles of Teaching and Class Management*—Findlay (Macmillan, 5/-); *Principles of Education*—Raymont (Longmans, 4/6); *The Way to Teach the Bible*—Moore (Longmans, 2/-); *Talks te Teachers on Psychology*—W. James (Longmans, 4/6).

LIFE AND WORK IN A THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

WALTER SHORT, B.A.

If the Sunday school worker would see how ministers are trained, he could not do better than visit Manchester. In addition to the School of Theology at the University, there are no less than nine Theological Colleges, including the Unitarian Home Missionary College. Eight of these Institutions are recognised for external lectures of the Manchester University, thus giving them a kind of unity, a unity reflected in the good fellowship that exists between their several professors and students. Numerically, the Unitarian College is one of the weakest of the group, but what it lacks in numbers, it possesses in intensity, as the academic results and the ministerial achievements of its *alumni* sufficiently indicate.

'Summerville,' a spacious old house, looking out upon pleasant lawns, and embowered among elms and poplars, is the home of the Unitarian Home Missionary College. The students of to-day have the advantage of a collective life which was denied to their predecessors, prior to 1905. Occupying scattered lodgings, and often straitened in means, it is to their credit that the pre-Summerville men exhibited a splendid *esprit de corps*. Their cheerfulness and abounding hope are at once a stimulus and a challenge to their successors whose lines have fallen in pleasanter places. If the present generation has a grievance as regards accommodation, it is that the rose leaves are too thickly strewn upon the garden paths! They occupy a house whose table is lavish alike in 'daily bread,' and food that does not perish. The garden is widely admired for the tasteful arangement of its trees and shrubs. When 'the time of the singing of birds is come,' and the limes, rhododendrons, laburnums and lilacs are in bloom, then if ever, there is joy in the college hall. The lecture bell, whose call none may disobey, assures the visitor that Summerville is not altogether given over to 'maying,' but in the afternoons, when he sees the men issuing forth for a cycle run, or a game of tennis, or a spell of cricket at the nets, or a turn at croquet, he can be forgiven if he feels just a little

envious, and inquires how the hearty fellows he encounters came into possession of so many of the good things of life.

As the 'Fresher' enters his name on the college roll he feels that for so simple a process, much has been demanded of him. Before he could reach the stage of being interviewed by the committee, a painstaking secretary had demanded of him high credentials as to character and capacity: an oculist had tested his sight: a conscientious physician had carefully examined him: and a keen principal had probed the deepest convolutions of his cerebrum. Then, and only then, was he considered fit to go before the committee. Fortunately for the nervous aspirant, that committee is presided over by the courtly Lieut.-Col. Jesse Pilcher, V.D., J.P., who more often than not has the pleasing intimation to make that the candidate has made out a case why he should be admitted to the entrance examination, a few months later. The scope of this examination depends upon the course of study an applicant seeks to follow. If he desires a theological course only (for which he may apply if twenty-five, or more, years of age) he will have to show acquaintance with the English Language and History, the Grammar of the Greek Testament, a text-book of Logic, three standard theological works, the Bible in English, and write an original essay or sermon in the examination room. If he looks to the full course (Arts and Theology), papers will be set designed to ascertain whether he is sufficiently advanced in learning to justify his being placed in university classes with a view to graduation. The applicant who has matriculated in any British University is excused all the subjects of the entrance examination save Scripture. Non-matriculated candidates have to present themselves for tests in Greek, Latin, English, Mathematics, and Scripture. The entrance examination is difficult or easy according to the examinee's ability and previous training. The grammar school boy and the teacher may be expected to acquit themselves well. It is different with the man who has spent many years in business following upon an elementary school education. If such an one would pass—and he often does—he must 'scorn delights and live laborious days' between his interview with the committee and his examination. When he can give up his berth in the office or the mill and place himself in the hands of a private tutor, he has brighter prospects of success. Of recent years candidates for the ministry have been in excess of those admitted to training. While sympathising with the ideal of a 'learned ministry,' one sometimes questions whether a knowledge of the classics is an infallible test of ministerial fitness. A greater co-ordination of our churches and colleges might lead to the removal of anomalies, and ensure the admittance of the right men and the rejection of the unsuitable.

The opening day of a new session is always vitally interesting to the students. The new men bring with them fervent hopes and often raise high expectations. The old students take up their courses after the summer vacation with renewed vigour, sharpened by the feeling that they are getting nearer to the fulfilment of their 'desire and intention to become ministers of the Gospel.' Let us suppose there are three 'Freshers'—a matriculated, a non-matriculated, and a 'special aptitude' student respectively. Since the University now insists upon a post-matriculation degree course of three years for both honours and ordinary undergradates, it is possible for a promising matriculated student to enter an honours school. Last year the college had one such man in the Honours School of Classics. The choice of an honours or an ordinary course, depends upon the calibre of the matriculated student. The non-matriculated man is entered for the matriculation classes. At the end of his first year he is expected to pass in all the five subjects. The University insists upon Greek or Latin, English, and Mathematics. The Unitarian Home Missionary College calls for Greek *and* Latin. The candidate is thus left the choice of one subject only. This he looks for among the modern languages or subjects like botany, physics, geography. Having passed the matriculation examination he has to decide whether to induce the committee to allow him to spend the next three years in an honours school, specialising in one great branch of learning, or pass the same period in qualifying for the ordinary

degree of Bachelor of Arts. Last year a man preferred to attend the Honours School in English Language and Literature.

What the student makes of his University course largely depends upon himself. The fruit is there if he will only cull it. He can grumble over his pipe that he is being ground between the upper and nether millstones of merely academic learning, or he can put his heart into his work and leave the University versed in classics, philosophy, general history, literature, mathematics, economics, and possibly a modern language or a special science. In addition to the strenuous life of the class-rooms, he may enjoy membership of the University Athletic Union, with its well-equipped playing-fields; the University Union just recently re-housed in up-to-date buildings; the University Societies, whose name is legion; and the University Settlement which carries on its multitudinous activities in the slum district of Ancoats. Given industry, buoyancy, and imagination, the three or four years spent concurrently at the University and Summerville may be made a period rich in the acquisition of learning, friends, and experience. The Independents, Baptists and Methodists send out their men for Sunday preaching almost from the beginning of their college course. The students of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, however, are not allowed to preach, except in vacation, and then only with the Principal's permission, until they have completed their arts course. During this period they are attached to Sunday schools in the Manchester District, where it is expected the resident minister will advise and befriend them. Though Sunday school teaching is all that is expected of the student, he may exert his influence almost without limit. Calling upon his scholars in their homes introduces him to the joys of pastoral visitation ; attending school business meetings reveals to him the inner workings of Sunday school management, tentative attempts at guild work give him a larger insight into character; listening to the sermons of the resident minister not only helps him to an appreciation of the delights of preaching, but brings him into touch with good people who invite him to their homes.

The concomitant paths of University life and Sunday school work at last broaden out into the theological course. Here the ex-Arts man and the ' special aptitude ' student join forces. If the ex-Artsman is not in possession of a degree, he takes precisely the same course, except that the ' special aptitude ' man may be excused one of the learned languages. This is not invariable. Last session an ex-Arts man was not entered for Hebrew, whilst a special aptitude man had to take it. In case a man obtains his degree in Arts, he embarks upon a course of study designed to qualify him for graduation in Divinity, and has the advantage of continuing at the University for some of his tuition. All theological students however, take the bulk of their work at Summerville, sitting at the feet of Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A. (Principal) and Rev. J. E. Manning, M.A. (Tutor). A short time ago Rev. W. L. Schroeder, M.A., conducted a class in voice production. Lectures are delivered Mondays to Fridays, mostly in the mornings. Afternoon lectures are a weariness to the flesh and ought not to have a place in a utopian institution. Four classes in the morning, followed by an afternoon's relaxation, and an evening of close study should be considered ample for the day. But, including what afternoon lectures appear in the time-table, a student's week seldom averages more than twenty classes.

The curriculum comprises the ancient languages, Biblical criticism and exegesis, ecclesiastic history, comparative religion, philosophy, and English literature. It has to be remembered that this follows upon a Graduate Course at the University, where a man may have taken philosophy and economics. A short time ago a young student in preaching before his fellow-students said that Tertullian and Irenaeus should now give place to Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw! He was only expressing in a milder way the sentiments of those who would burn down Theological Colleges as cumberers of the ground. To say that the curriculum at Summerville is perfect, would be to claim for it what cannot be conceded to any group of subjects that has yet appeared. On the other hand, no loyal son of the College can say that had he made the most of his collegiate opportunities, he would have lacked that knowledge the non-acquirement of which

he deplores. With university and denominational teachers, roomy studies, good libraries, an airy common room, a liberal monetary allowance, fair gardens, ample time (six years for the full course), co-residence with a learned Principal and a cultured matron (Miss G. Panton Ham), what more could be desired? If the men were of the 'old Roman height' nothing more would be required to complete their bliss. As it is, a young Resident Tutor would be invaluable. He would help the 'fresher' over the pitfalls in classics and mathematics. Any tendency to fritter away time would be checked. The weak man would be strengethened, and the strong encouraged. Given sympathetic supervision in their private study, and wise direction in their general reading, much better work would be done at the University, and the men would be better equipped for grasping the import of higher theological studies.

Life at Summerville is remarkably free from petty rules and narrowing restrictions. Much is left to the honour of the men. They are expected to attend lectures at the University and Summerville. Lectures apart, they have the disposal of their own time. One rule is strictly enforced. Unless a man has obtained the Principal's permission he must be indoors by 10.30 in the evening. The day's work begins officially when the 'Junior Theologer' goes his rounds at 7.30 a.m. ringing up the sleepers. At 8.15 the students assemble (voluntarily) for prayers. Breakfast is served at 8.30, the Principal and Miss G. Panton Ham making the meal more convivial by their presence. The first class meets at 9.15. A cold luncheon is served between 12.0 noon and 2 o'clock; afternoon tea in the drawing room at 4.30, and dinner at 6.30.

The students frequently receive their friends for afternoon tea. They have the privilege of inviting their friends to join in the other meals, but for these suitable charges are made. Only those who have occupied solitary lodgings can fully appreciate the common college board with its abundance of wholesome fare and flow of good-humoured talk. It is said one cannot know a man until one has broken bread with him. Fellow collegians certainly become intimately acquainted and very often warm attachments are formed.

A man cannot live to himself alone in a Theological College. Personal influence is paramount. Whether strong or weak, every student affects the corporate body. A good common-room debate; a fireside chat; an exchange of courtesies on the staircase; a gathering of laughers in a corridor, tend to melt the ice, and very often student comes to love student 'as his own soul.'

Space does not permit me to speak of the idiosyncrasies of the average theological student. Neither is it my purpose to mention what has been done by students in the field of social service. Hardly a man enters the College without identifying himself with some living movement, so throbbing and absorbing are the currents of human life in Manchester.

Every man feels that he must become a preacher. On Thursdays, when a sermon class is held and attended by the tutors, the anxiety of the men to excel in pulpit work is very apparent. A written sermon is delivered, and two brief addresses are given *ex tempore*. All the men participate in these exercises, and, in addition, all have to prepare a sermon scheme on the text of the written sermon. The value of this is reflected in the Sunday work of the theological students who in 1908 conducted three hundred and ninety one separate services exclusive of such vacation engagements as students are allowed to make for themselves.

After all the Unitarian Home Missionary College is a means to an end. Those who have been nurtured there love their 'Alma Mater.' They cherish the golden times she afforded them. To have been under her tender shelter, is to be filled with clinging gratitude. But in due course 'the call' has come, and strong young men have left the academic home to undertake their life's work with missionary zeal. As they have parted from their tender mother they have indulged the feeling that they might have been more faithful and affectionate sons. And now they have to leave it to their successors to embrace academic opportunities which to themselves are irrevocable, and set themselves the task of being truer in their new spheres, than ever they were to their 'Alma Mater.'

'Exercise thyself unto godliness.'

THE WORK OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Attendance Statistics

ION PRITCHARD

A COPY of the Annual Report is sent every year to the superintendents of all the Sunday schools connected with the Association. Will my readers ask to see it, and note what a large part—eleven pages—is taken up by the tables of figures showing the attendances of Teachers, Scholars and Elder Scholars in the 292 schools which sent in their returns in 1908.

We do not lay too much stress on the value of the figures alone, but they do possess many points of interest in themselves, especially when they are compared with those of former years. It will be perceived first, that the collecting and setting out of these statistics is a serious piece of work, and, next, that by means of these figures superintendents and the officers of the Association are brought into touch with one another at least once in the year.

Some few months ago two large Associations applied for the Attendance Statistics of the Sunday schools connected with our body. The request was gladly complied with, as we recognised that, although we were separated by theological differences, statistics were bringing us together. The Sunday School Union was collecting the attendance returns of all the Protestant Sunday schools in the United Kingdom. The task has been completed and the results published. Here is a short extract from the report:—

'Of the thirty denominations and societies which practically cover the Protestant Sunday Schools in the United Kingdom, eleven report a decrease while fourteen show an increase, five giving the same figures as in the preceding year. The net increase is 2,412 teachers and 25,101 scholars. Denominations show that the greatest progress has been made among the senior and Bible classes. The Unitarians, for example, have maintained a continuous increase in this department for thirty years.

'Total numbers for the year 1909:—Scholars, 7,425,857; Teachers, 712,610.'

The other application had a still more comprehensive aim in view, that of obtaining statistics from all parts of the world. The World's Sunday School Association has an executive committee meeting in Philadelphia. Five annual conventions have been held in London, St. Louis, London, Jerusalem and Rome, and the sixth meeting is to be held next year—May 19-24, at Washington. The place of the Sunday School Association has been recognised by an invitation to send three representatives to the convention. Further, our churches and schools are invited to join in celebrating a 'World's Sunday School Day,' fixed for May 22nd, 1910, and a suggested service has been sent round. Some portion of the wording of this service may not appeal to us, but the underlying purpose to help answer the prayer 'Thy Kingdom come' by churches realising the importance of the Sunday School as a missionary agent in the home and in the world—will commend itself to all of us.

A few weeks ago, Rev. J. J. Wright, in an address in Belfast made the suggestion that a Sunday should be set apart as a Sunday School Day every year, and now we would suggest that this be done, and that May 22nd, the day fixed by the World's Sunday School Association, should be the day chosen.

Ministers and superintendents are invited to send to me, at Essex Hall, a word of reply if they are willing to support the proposal, and should there be anything approaching a general approval of the plan, our committee will no doubt give its assistance, and help to make the necessary arrangements for carrying it through.

LET IT BE GRANTED that it is the duty of Sunday school teachers

To prepare lessons;

To co-operate with the superintedent;

To visit scholars in their homes;

To recognise that Sunday school work is religious work;

To bring scholars and parents into close touch with the church;

To report anything to the minister that will be likely to help him in the efficient discharge of his duty.

WITH THE DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS:

Newcastle and District.

ALFRED HALL, M.A.

The Newcastle and District Sunday School Association has at least one distinction; it is the smallest included in the Annual Report of the Sunday School Association. It has the fewest schools, the fewest teachers and the fewest scholars. There are schools in Lancashire which can with truth exclaim, 'We have twice as many children in our school alone as they have in their whole Association.' If anyone in a moment of boastfulness were prompted to make such a remark, we should not hide our diminished heads, but should say with pride, 'Small as we are, we are nevertheless an Association,' and perhaps there is more intercommunication among us than in larger Unions.' We should not be dismayed, if someone ventured to say that nothing but the clannishness of these border tribes could have called the Association into existence.

We believe that the desire to know what so small a folk can possibly be doing prompted the Editor first to request and then to demand this report. The Association embraces the schools at Choppington, Gateshead, Newcastle-on-Tyne, South Shields and Sunderland. According to the last report we had 275 scholars and 29 teachers, but we believe we shall have better figures to present next year. As an Association we have existed six years, the preliminary meeting being held on October 8th, 1903, and during that period, our present president, Mr. Robinson, has acted in a very energetic way as secretary, an office which is now admirably filled by Miss White of Sunderland. We have been favoured with enthusiastic workers, among whom are Rev. G. A. Ferguson, Mr. French and Mr. Tremain. Alas! Mr. Tremain has left us for Bristol, and by his removal the Association—and Sunday school work generally in the North East—has sustained a heavy loss. It was an object lesson to watch the manner in which he pulled the Newcastle Sunday School together, and it may interest him to know that the good work goes on, and we have had to bring more forms into the main room for the opening services. How he used to sit on the pessimist, and laugh gloomy people out of countenance! And what a power he had of making other people work!

The Association meets once a quarter regularly, each school being visited in turn. Considering our small staff of teachers, these meetings are well attended; some of the ministers also are always in evidence. Each school is visited quarterly and the reports of the visits are read. They are always faithful reports, we must believe, for they are frank, every little fault—whether the schools opened punctually to the minute; whether the children separated to their classes in an orderly fashion; and whether all of them sang all the verses of all the hymns—being noted. Explanations sometimes follow from the criticised parties, but in all cases there is an effort made to remove every fault mentioned. The schools, as a result, will compare favourably with any in the kingdom.

During the past year, after conference on practical matters and on new methods, the teachers have had discussions on the Religion of the Old Testament. Many of them have read Professor Peake's admirable little book on this subject, and the ministers have explained any difficulty which has been encountered in reading, and enlarged on certain aspects of old Israel's faith and experience. It is intended that other religious subjects shall be discussed, for we are convinced that our chief object should be, not to teach elementary science or tell fairy tales, but definitely to instruct the children in the rudiments of religion and our own faith in particular. Occasionally papers have been given by different members and discussed, but these are now being replaced by conversation on books which the teachers are urged to study. It will be seen from this that our Association is doing a necessary and useful work, and that through its existence the schools are being made more efficient, and the teachers are preparing themselves for developing the higher side of the children's nature.

Reports from the individual schools must be left for a future occasion, but two useful agencies in connection with the Newcastle school may be mentioned.

The first is a Flower Club, to which many of the children and all the teachers contribute one penny per month. By this agency flowers are always placed on the superintendent's table and afterwards taken by the contributors in turn to a child or an adult who is sick. It is an excellent way of encouraging the children to care for the suffering. Often the flowers are given, with the result that the funds accumulate, and last winter the balance was handed to the minister, who privately furnished clothing for some of the poorer children.

Then, at the suggestion of another earnest worker, Mr. Stewardson, the teachers and elder scholars in turn close the school instead of the superintendent. A list has been posted in the schoolroom, and the scheme during the few weeks it has been in practice, has worked admirably, giving confidence to those who have officiated and lifting the dull formality from off the last moments of meeting.

There is other work being done in our Association, from which our larger Unions may learn and perhaps be so led that they will not 'despise the little one.'

PRAYERS

(For Opening School)

O God! the Maker of Heaven and earth; we come to sing thy praise and offer our thanks to thee. We thank thee for the beautiful world in which thou hast placed us. The grass, the flowers, the trees, the brooks, the hills, the songs of the birds, all tell of thy care and goodness. We thank thee for our Sunday school and all the joy and gladness it brings to us. Help us, Heavenly Father, to help our teachers; and may we all work together to build up our lives so that we may become men and women after thine own heart—honest, true and good. AMEN.

(For Closing School)

Heavenly Father! help us to carry with us in our hearts and minds some of the lessons we have learned this day. Give us strength to be true in our thoughts and honest in all our doings. Help us to carry into our homes some of the joy and brightness of our Sunday school. Make us true friends and helpers of all who need our help. Bless our parents, teachers, and friends. Give us understanding so that we may learn to think of thee as the Father of all mankind. We would rejoice in thee for thou art good. Receive our joyfulness for praise. AMEN.

BY THE WAY

BROOKE HERFORD.—Having been asked to furnish a short reminiscence of the late Brooke Herford, which in a weak moment I had mentioned to a friend, I will endeavour to set forth the slight incident. After a lapse of well over forty years I cannot vouch for the verbal accuracy of my memory, a word here and there may be different from those actually used. When the Rev. Brooke Herford came from Sheffield to New Bridge Street, Manchester, as successor to 'old' Dr. Beard, father of the late Dr. Charles Beard, of Liverpool, he was beginning to be spoken of as one of our 'coming men,' and, as he belonged to a local, well-known, and highly-respected family, much interest was felt in his career. Like all first-class preachers, orators, or actors, he was of a highly nervous temperament. To this characteristic I should say there are absolutely no exceptions—at any rate, in the course of a fairly long experience, I have never seen one. The tones of his voice, the movements of his hands, his whole attitude in the pulpit indicated this temperament unmistakably. Clear sighted, quick of perception, and never having the least doubt about the position he took up on any question, he was almost impatient of opposition by duller, slower or less intellectual personalities. He was born to rule in any walk of life, and generally received the deference paid to him as quite a natural thing. He beat down all opposition with a few incisive words, and he was often in the right, so far as I am able to judge.

On one occasion, however, he laughingly confessed to me that he had met his match—the only time upon which he failed to impress his hearers or acknowledged himself beaten. It occurred in this way. As there was a dearth of teachers at 'New Bridge Street' I was prevailed upon to undertake the same kind of class which I taught at 'Lower Mosley Street' on Sunday afternoons (Cross Street Chapel being my place of worship), and every Sunday morning I went to the former school and then back to service at my own chapel. It was a very large class, of very small boys and girls. If the term 'Day Nursery' had then been as common as it is now it might have been applied quite appropriately. I had a separate class-room of course, and I and my numerous family thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. These children were not the children of people connected with the Chapel (especially the Lower Mosley Street people), but were poor mites from the neighbourhood. As an illustration of this I may say that many of them were such children as the theatres require at 'Pantomime' time. I remember, two small boys—brothers—who were so little and thin that it was

said their parents intended them for jockeys, and gave them gin to drink to prevent growth. At any rate the elder became a rather famous jockey. I watched his career with some interest. He was a smart boy, and made a decided hit as a dancing 'Goose' in one of the Pantomimes, and on one occasion he played with Toole in one of his farces. The younger boy was very meek and mild, and when the other children told me that 'Johnnie' ——— was also engaged in the Pantomime I could scarcely believe it. I said before all the class 'and what do *you* do in the Pantomime, Johnnie?' He replied with a little piping voice, 'If you please, teacher, I'm only a "Demon."' I think I dismissed the class somewhat abruptly.

One Sunday I was out of town, and, although I sent an intimation to the Superintendent, my class was without teacher when the school opened. I was not aware of this, or of what took place in consequence, until a week or two afterwards, when Mrs. Herford asked me to go up to supper with them. After the meal, when chatting by the fire, Mrs. Herford said, in her usual placid way, 'Oh, Mr. Harwood, I hope you will never go away again without seeing your class provided with a teacher.' I explained that I had written concerning my absence, which was what the teachers were expected to do, and I asked why she had made the remark. She replied 'your children completely upset "Brooke" for the whole day.' (I think she spoke of him as 'Brooke,' but of this I am not sure). 'He came home in an awful frame of mind. I don't know when I've seen him so much put out. He was irritated and entirely unhinged, and could scarcely be prevailed upon to take any dinner. In fact he was utterly miserable, but he had better tell you himself, for I could get little out of him beyond the fact that he had taken your class.' I looked across at Mr. Herford, who laughed quietly and said: 'My wife is quite right, I *was* put out a good deal. When I got down I found there was no teacher for the children's class, so in the innocence of my heart, I offered to take it, and went into them boldly. Never dreaming of any difficulty, I thought I could tell them some little story, but found the room all confusion. Every child was talking its loudest, and some jumping over the forms. I said "Order, children, order, sit down now and I'll tell you a nice little story." There was a momentary silence, and some sat down, but others stared at me, and then recommenced their pranks. I became very severe, and at last succeeded in getting them seated, but I could not get the least attention to anything I said. The boys were playing "catches" with their rolled-up pocket handkerchiefs, and the girls plucking at the ribbons of the hats of those in front of them. Nobody seemed to know what I was talking about, although I was nearly hoarse and the perspiration ran down my face with the exertion and irritation. I felt quite humiliated; I had frequently looked in upon you, and had always found the children quiet and attentive, and apparently interested. At last I left the class and went straight to the vestry to calm down, but I could not forget the incident for a day or two. That is the reason why my wife appealed to you.' All this was told against himself, with a quiet humour characteristic of him, and after we had had a good laugh over the account, I explained to him that the fact of the children being left without a teacher when school opened had probably caused them to get out of hand, and that no one else would have fared better. This mollified him a little, but he shook his head and said, 'Well, perhaps you are right, but I shall not try the experiment again.' He was not a man easy to convince.—*John Harwood.*

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An Experienced Teacher writes: For the last seven years I have followed the list of lessons printed on the Motto Card published by the Association. I read the passage selected, think of the lesson to be drawn from it, jot down any points that must be specially dwelt upon, and try to illustrate from incidents in real life. I have a Bible Dictionary which is a help, and the notes in our Family Bible sometimes throw light on a difficult passage.

My chief aim has always been (1) to make my scholars understand that character is and must be the great goal at which to aim; (2) to draw from the lesson examples which we ought to imitate if right and noble and true; or reject and hold as warnings if harmful.

I tell them to 'value character before everything and put their character into their work'—one of the many New Year mottoes I have read at one time or another in the *Christian Life*. I scarcely ever let my scholars read round. For one reason, some of them do not like to; for another, I often feel that after studying the lesson I can put the emphasis just where it is needed to bring out the main points and meaning of the lesson. Sometimes I give a synopsis of previous lessons to bring to mind incidents which had led up to the lesson for the day. I feel that it is no use going to a class and hoping for any good result unless the subject has been thought about, and unless there is something definite in the mind of the teacher.

If Sunday schools are to continue to be 'England's glory,' teachers will have to be conscientious in their work and true to their principles. They will have to show their scholars that they are in earnest and not simply whiling away the time. I feel, too, that personal influence has so much to do with the success of the lesson. At Christmas I give each member of my class one of the Association's Motto Cards, so that they may all know what the subject of the lesson is.

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One of the 'Blessed Encouragers' who, when they hear kind things, make a point of passing them on, sent us the following quotation from a letter written by Rev. Dr. Barnes, of Montreal. 'I would add my great appreciation of the New Sunday School Quarterly—a most useful manual—for several copies of which I was glad to send subscriptions.' Then our friend wrote his own word: 'The Sunday School Quarterly is excellent, and it should have a wide circulation and be of great use.'

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Title Page and Index will be forwarded to any one sending a penny stamp to Mr. Hare, Essex Hall.